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ROUGH AND READY.

PICTORIAL LIFE  
OF  
GENERAL TAYLOR,

THE HERO OF

OKEE CHOBEE, PALO ALTO, RESACA DE LA PALMA,  
MONTEREY, AND BUENA VISTA.

WITH NUMEROUS

ILLUSTRATIVE ANECDOTES

AND

EMBELLISHMENTS.



PHILADELPHIA:  
LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON

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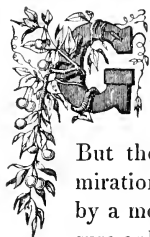
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## P R E F A C E.

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GENIUS, or great natural capacity, unaided by experience and unfortified by previous application, may often prove equal to a sudden exigence. But the upward flight which challenges admiration may in the next moment be followed by a mortifying plunge, which escapes censure only by the intervention of pity. Hence we find that mere genius has needed apologists in the ratio of its admirers; and that in the relation of the lives of brilliant men, the voice of praise must alternate with pleadings for their deficiencies. Between what they have done well, and what they have committed ill — between what they have performed and what they have neglected—a world usually indulgent to the gifted strikes the balance in their favour with an “if,” and their account is rendered, like a factor’s bill, with “errors excepted.”

We wish, in this brief narrative of the public life of General Zachary Taylor, to appear rather as his impartial historian, than as his indiscriminate eulogist. But the splendour of the military achievements in which he has been the guiding arm, has caused an enthusiasm which is contagious; and raised a grateful tempest of praise, which would cover great faults, if there were any gross faults to conceal in his military character, or in his public life. "Success," says a quaint old writer, "is a rare paint—it hides all the ugliness."

But while we confine our remarks to his public life, we beg not to be misunderstood, as intending to leave the inference that his private relations are open to censure. In truth, we know little of him, except as a soldier, and have therefore forbore to attempt any relation of his private history; nor is such matter necessary to our purpose. Common fame is now one-voiced in his praise as a man and a soldier. Circumstances may subject him to a stricter ordeal by and by; and while we now temper adulation with the consideration that he is human, and therefore frail, we must apply more than the same abatement to the censure which envy, inseparable from success, may aggravate. Should detraction succeed eulogy, we must take into account the accusers as

well as the accused. No man can occupy a responsible place, without clashing against the wishes, if not against the interest, of others.

General Taylor is unquestionably a man of genius—but he is as unquestionably a man of application. The remarks in our opening paragraph apply to him only by contrast; and it was for the sake of that contrast that they are introduced. The lesson which his life teaches is one of great practical utility. His military knowledge is the purchase of long experience, and of diligent service. To the great mass of the public he seemed to start forth into fame, as a fabled personage of mythology came into being, the instant creation of a perfect hero. But before the nation was astonished with the feats of our army on the Rio Grande, Zachary Taylor had been for nearly forty years a soldier; and of this long term the greater part was spent in service which gave little other reward than the consciousness that he was performing his duty. He obtained not fame, but knowledge.

Reviewing his life, we find the lad quick of parts, yet diligent of application. As “the child is father of the man,” the same characteristic has marked his whole course. He has not been content that his superior capacity should put him, with scarce an

effort, on a simple equality with those who are compelled to labour to perform that which he can effect without. To his aptness he has added industry — a rare combination — and thus has improved his natural powers to a better purpose than that of merely accomplishing with ease what others can only do with effort. He has doubled by application whatever advantages his eminent abilities conferred.

We cannot all be soldiers—and it is much to be hoped that the need of men whose profession is arms may every day grow less and less. But we can all act upon the motto that “whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well,” and thus in times of comparative repose be gathering strength and knowledge for such occasions as demand extraordinary exertions. Thus trained, when we conquer — for there are conquests in peace as well as in war — the praise of those who know nothing of our history may be the more clamorous; but that of those who understand us will be the more judicious—the more sincere—and the more permanent.

Philadelphia, June 1, 1847.

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# L I F E

OF

## GENERAL TAYLOR.

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### CHAPTER I.

Introductory Remarks—Birth and Parentage of Zachary Taylor—Character of his Father—Pioneer Life—Zachary's early associations—Mr. Elisha Ayres—Young Taylor's character as a Student—His Military bent—Early Enthusiasm, contrasted with ripe Experience.



T is sometimes said that great occasions make great men. It is better, and more consonant with truth and history to say that proper opportunities develop the character of heroes and statesmen ; and be the exigency a great one which calls the eyes of the world upon the heroic deeds of the actors in it, or a scene of equal danger, but less prominence, in which the noble qualities of the man are seen and appreciated only by a discerning few, his manhood and virtue are evident in the one case as in the other. The difference is in the number of the admirers of the man, rather than

in his own inherent claim to respect and honour. Zachary Taylor, in 1812, defending successfully a rude fort, with an effective force of only twenty men, against a horde of furious savages, was no less the hero in personal traits, the man of prudence in council, of decision in action, of fortitude and firmness in danger, than when, in the few short months of his recent brilliant career, he filled the world with the clamour of praise at the deeds of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, only to exceed his own reputation at Monterey and Buena Vista. All honour is due to the subordinates, leaders and men, whose courage and noble conduct secured the victory. But a good commander makes good men. Without the direction of an able chieftain, courage is wasted in fruitless efforts; and indecision, which, under proper auspices, rises into bravery, without the bold guidance of a master-mind, sinks into cowardice.

Zachary Taylor was born in Orange county, in the state of Virginia, in the year 1790. His father, Colonel Richard Taylor, was a descendant of one of the earliest settlers of "the Old Dominion." He was remarkable for the hardy and impetuous courage which are necessary ingredients in the character of the pioneer of the wilderness, who has to



contend not only with wild beasts, but wild men; and who finds in the inhospitality and hardships of the forest and prairie, but a small part of the trying difficulties of his position. The romantic and deeply interesting annals of Virginia have much to say of the deeds of the men whose character Zachary Taylor has inherited, and in whose steps, by education and natural emulation, he has been led. The ruder courage essential in the wilderness and in an infant colony has been softened, in the subject of our biography, by the milder virtues which arise under the influence of civilization and safety. A truly brave man, he is as humane as courageous. Unlike those who love war for its ferocity and carnage, and who seem to delight in blood for its own sake, Zachary Taylor goes into the field at the call of patriotism and duty only; and, having vigorously prosecuted the stern demands of war, his heart is open to the calls of humanity;—striking proofs of which will be presented to the reader in the course of his biography.

The father of Zachary Taylor was one of the original settlers in Kentucky, where he resided on his estate near Lexington, until his death in 1826. We have spoken of his personal character; and his adventures will be inferred from the pioneer life

he led, in the "dark and bloody ground." Such is the signification of the beautiful Indian word, "Kentucky." Renowned for his desperate encounters with the Indians, he was a prominent man in civil life, holding many offices in the state of his adoption, and serving in several of the national Electoral Colleges. At the fire-side of such a father, with an elder brother who was in the profession of arms before him, the mind of Zachary could not fail to receive a bias toward the pursuit, which lads are often led to consider the only noble one—that of arms. Zachary showed even more than the usual "military enthusiasm" of boyhood; and in his case, it was a practical bent; for he looked forward constantly to the profession of a soldier, as his lot in life. He was early gratified, entering the United States Army as a lieutenant in 1808, at the age of eighteen. In that service he has remained ever since—a period of nearly forty years. His successes, therefore, are the results of patient and laborious experience, added to the advantages of his natural adaptation for the arduous and adventurous life of a soldier. We mention the circumstance more particularly, that our young readers may understand, that military excellence, no more than any other, can be acquired without perseverance and

application. By military excellence, we do not mean courage and resolution only, though they are the habitual traits of the veteran soldier. We speak of the high qualities as a commander, which the character and deeds of Zachary Taylor will exhibit to the reader, as we proceed in the narrative of his life.

His early education, and that of his brothers, was conducted by Mr. Elisha Ayres, a native of Norwich, Connecticut, where he is now living, at an advanced age. The thin population and peculiar disadvantages of a new country, fifty years ago, denied to Zachary the advantages of improvement, which are within the reach of our young readers. Mr. Ayres was the private tutor of the sons of Col. Richard Taylor, and he has had the high gratification of watching through a long life the exercise of the abilities which he aided in developing. Particularly has the course of Zachary been a subject of deep interest to him; for although Gen. Taylor seemed to break at once, in full fame and honour, upon the nation, within the last year, Mr. Ayres, his tutor, and his companions in arms, have long known the qualities which gave earnest of ability to distinguish himself. They have long been familiar with deeds of equal daring, with those which are now cele-

brated by a nation ; but which, as we remarked at the beginning of the chapter, were less conspicuous, because taking place in a narrower field.

Mr. Ayres, as will readily be imagined, is fond of speaking of his former pupil ; and takes a natural and proper pride in the character, which he aided in forming. The account he gives of his childhood, illustrates the truth of the saying, “ the child is father of the man ”—which means, that the character the boy forms, will attend him through life. Zachary in youth was quick in learning, and still patient in study. Some lads with ready capacity trust too much to their quickness ; and do things carelessly and in a hurry, because they feel that they have the ability to “ catch up ” even though they fall behind. But this, we are given to understand, was not Zachary’s course. He improved the full benefit of his natural abilities, by adding to them the advantage of studious and methodical habits. His temperament was ardent ; and yet he was firm in pursuing what he commenced ; and his careful and thoughtful observation led him fully to determine what he could do, before he undertook it, and then to pursue it to the end. While he dared more than the careful generally do, he effected more than those who are bold without judgment

can. Fortitude under reverses, accompanied by perseverance to resist under apparently hopeless circumstances, change defeat into victory ; and it is by such qualities of character, that the boy marked out his own destiny, and the man has caused himself to be acknowledged among the ablest military commanders of his time.

Zachary looked forward from his youth, to the army, as his future scene of labour and fame. This was a future which was sure to present itself to the son of Col. Richard Taylor, educated in a border tract, amid the excitement of continued Indian forays. In his ears were continually being repeated, anecdotes of stirring adventures ; and as he came forward into youth, while the clouds were gathering, which at last broke in the last war with Great Britain, it is not to be wondered that his active and sanguine disposition looked to the profession of arms as the most—perhaps the only honourable one in which a patriot could serve his country. The military spirit was the necessary legacy of the founders of this republic to their followers.

We live in different times. Intending no disparagement to those who, like young Taylor, modelled their patriotism upon the classic examples of Greece and Rome, and looked to service in the

field, and the risk, and loss, if need were, of life in the battle-field, as the test of their love of country ; we may properly congratulate ourselves, that war is now viewed in a different light from that in which it was regarded, no farther back than in the last century. General Taylor himself, successful as he has been in arms, looks back upon his brilliant battle-fields with a very different feeling from that with which, when marshalling his troop of boys, and leading them on to mimic assaults to conquer imaginary enemies, he looked forward to the military glory of the man. He is doubtless ready to say with another successful commander, that the next great calamity to a military defeat, is a great victory. The advancement of Christian knowledge and civilization, has disseminated the wholesome truth, that war under all circumstances is a great evil ; and that the nation which needlessly or recklessly rushes into it, incurs a fearful responsibility. Once it was undertaken upon the most colourless pretexts, being considered chivalric and desirable in itself, and rather to be courted than avoided by nations who would be esteemed great and honourable. Now it is deemed in itself disastrous, and a great calamity, not to be undertaken on light ground, or engaged in, except at the stern compulsion of

necessity. In such a light, we are told, General Taylor regards it. His sound practical sense and judgment, matured by a life of active experience, have placed him among those, who least of all desire war and bloodshed, for the mere purpose of personal fame and aggrandizement. He knows that the price of a country wasted, and the innocent and inactive, suffering with the guilty; the child fatherless, the mother a widow, the old deprived of support, and the young cut off in their usefulness, is too dear a price to pay for the mere glory of a commander, or the self-laudation of a nation. He has heard the shrieks of the dying, and the groans of the wounded. He has seen the suffering in their extremity, instead of being comforted and relieved, ridden over by the iron heels of clashing hosts. He has seen the image of God disfigured and maimed by the angry passions of man; and in the ghastly light of the pale moon, he has gone over the field, strewn with the prostrate forms of those who, a few hours before, were wrestling in life and for life, with the furious strength of despair. The silent lips of those pallid faces have told to him their eloquent tale of the wrong and outrage inseparable from war, however just and inevitable. General Zachary Taylor, with the fresh laurels of his

four last great battles thick upon him, would be the last man to hold out, to the youth of his country, war of itself as a thing to be desired, or military fame as the greatest honour of a Christian people.

It is his highest praise that he is, while a great soldier, a good and enlightened citizen. His vision is not restricted to the single arm of his country's service in which he is engaged. And it is highly to his honour that he is no less remarkable for his efforts to restrain unnecessary violence, and mitigate and relieve the terrors of war, than for his eminent services in the hour of conflict.



## CHAPTER II.

The affair of the Chesapeake. — Investigation into the case of the Deserters. — The Chesapeake hailed by the Leopard. — Vice Admiral Berkeley's order. — Refusal of Commodore Barron to comply. — Broadside, and continued firing by the Leopard. — The British Commander takes the Deserters. — Natural exasperation of the American People. — Young Taylor solicits and obtains a commission in the belief that War was impending. — Lieutenant Taylor promoted to a Captaincy. — Brevetted Major. — Meaning of the word "brevet."



IN the year 1807, occurred the memorable attack upon the United States frigate Chesapeake, by the British ship Leopard. The irritation of the public mind against Great Britain was so aggravated and increased by this event, added to previous causes of complaint, that it may properly be classed among the causes which led to the war of 1812. Certain deserters from the British navy were known to be on board; official proceedings having been had in relation to them, before the sailing of the Chesapeake from Norfolk. The men were three in number, and claimed to be American citizens impressed into the

British service, who only improved the first opportunity to rejoin the flag of their own country. At the representation of the British Minister at Washington, an investigation was made. Two of the men were undoubtedly proved to be what they represented themselves ; and though the third did not absolutely establish his pretensions, the American government declined to give up any who appealed as a native to the protection of the American flag.

In the latter end of June, 1807, the Chesapeake proceeded to sea from Norfolk, bound to the Mediterranean, to relieve the Constitution. Hardly was she out of the waters of the United States, when the Leopard, which had stood out to sea before her, from Hampton Roads, keeping the advantage of the weather gage of the Chesapeake, hailed the American frigate, and said she had despatches to send on board. Captain Gordon was in command of the Chesapeake, and the vessel wore also the broad pennant of Commodore Barron. The commodore answered the hail, and said he would receive a boat. In a few minutes a British Lieutenant came on board, and produced an order from Vice Admiral Berkeley requiring all captains of vessels under his command, should they fall in with the Chesapeake, out of the waters of the United States,

to search her for deserters, and offering the same opportunity of search to the Americans. Accompanying the order was a note from the captain of the Leopard to the commander of the Chesapeake, referring to the instructions, and expressing the hope that every thing in relation to the deserters would be adjusted in a manner to leave "the harmony between the nations undisturbed," &c. &c.

Commodore Barron, of course, refused that his men should be mustered by a foreign officer, for any such purpose. While the British Lieutenant was on board the Chesapeake, the signal was shown from the Leopard for the return of the boat. As soon as the answer of Commodore Barron was received by the Leopard, the English ship hailed the Chesapeake again. Commodore Barron answered that he did not understand, and the English ship then fired a shot ahead of the Chesapeake, and in an instant more followed it with a broadside. The firing continued from twelve to fifteen minutes, the Chesapeake unable to answer even a single gun. At length one gun was discharged from the Chesapeake almost simultaneously with the pulling down of the flag, by the order of Commodore Barron. This one shot from the Chesapeake, which was fired by means of a coal brought from the galley

or cook's stove, struck the Leopard, but injured no person. On board the Chesapeake three men were killed ; eight were badly, and ten slightly wounded. Among the wounded was the Commodore.

Commodore Barron instantly sent a boat to the Leopard, stating that his ship was the prize of the English captain. The latter refused to take possession of the Chesapeake, but mustered the men, and picked out the three men previously claimed, and one more. Of these four men, one died, two were returned to the Chesapeake, by order of the British government, but the fourth was hanged by a court-martial, before the orders came from England, under which the other two were restored. Captain Humphreys, the commander of the Leopard, was "shelved," or discontinued from active service, for having exceeded his instructions.

The Chesapeake was, at the time of the attack by the Leopard, as completely unfit for service as if she had been a merchant-ship, instead of a vessel of war. She was not in any sense, technical or otherwise, "clear for action," and it appeared in testimony before the court-martial by which Commodore Barron was tried, that even if one broadside could have been fired by her, the second could not have followed it. Such are the facts, and we have

not space, nor is it necessary to go into details to show why these things were. The commodore was found guilty, and suspended for five years for his neglect in preparing his vessel, though his personal courage remained undoubted. The attack took place on the day the Chesapeake sailed, and she appears to have left the Roads utterly unprepared and in great confusion. Her case has made the discipline of the national marine much more exact and rigid since.

To understand a man's conduct, and properly to weigh and appreciate his motives, it is necessary to know the temper and spirit of the times in which he lived. This outrage on the American flag—for the disavowal of the act by the British government admits that word, if any such admission be deemed necessary to establish the character of the transaction,—filled the land with indignation. War was breathed by the impetuous; and the clear-sighted began now to count on hostilities with Great Britain as among the probable events of the future. The great contest of the Revolution had been but about twenty years closed, and every person of mature age may be said to have had some recollection of that struggle, or of the immediate consequences of it, in a feeling toward Great Britain, as if, when

an enemy was spoken of, no other could be meant than her. Young Taylor was now about eighteen years old, an age which supposes that his earliest recollections of the "war talk," which boys delight to hear, must have embraced Great Britain as the natural enemy of his country. The proceedings of Congress, by which British war-vessels were interdicted from entering American waters, the imposition of the embargo, the court-martial which tried the officers of the unlucky frigate, all tended to excite the public mind, and all aided to fill the mouths of the nation with the one topic. It was not, therefore, with the view of peace campaigns that Zachary Taylor, at the early age of eighteen, accepted the lieutenancy in the army, which his father and friends procured for him. It was with the expectation of actual service, and with the ambition to distinguish himself, that, scarcely through with marshalling lads in mock engagements, he entered into the actual and regular service of the United States. He eagerly desired the opportunity to distinguish himself; and his long military life has afforded no incident to show that he misjudged his capacities, or that his friends were wrong in furthering his inclinations.

The blessings of a long peace have happily

changed the feelings of Americans and Englishmen toward each other; and we have introduced the affair of the Chesapeake into our history, that the young reader may have some appreciation of the circumstances under which the subject of this biography assumed the sword as his companion, and chose arms as his profession. We do not wish to be understood that it was from any particular enmity to Great Britain, for his life shows him superior to national prejudices; but we desire that the young reader should comprehend the fact that forty years ago the idea of two nations being natural and hereditary enemies was almost an universal one. The history of England and France, for centuries changing from peace to war and from war to peace, with as little expression of surprise as the rise or fall of the market now occasions, and with apparently as little doubt that war is as natural and proper a condition as peace—had prepared the descendants of Europeans in this country for the same sort of feeling. Though we have no data on which the fact can be asserted, there can be no reasonable doubt that when Lieutenant Taylor buckled on his sword, he expected fully that it would soon be unsheathed in a contest with that country to which the young warriors of America were then

accustomed to look as the presumed enemy of the United States. And certainly the exasperation of the public mind against Great Britain, increased by an acerbity of party feeling, which has never been equalled in intensity since, would strengthen the impression.

Lieutenant Taylor's commission attached him to the seventh regiment of United States Infantry. For the first four years, contrary to the expectations with which he had entered the service, no opportunity presented itself for active duty in the field. The public ear, during this period, was full of rumours of war; for the belligerent attitude of the European nations was continually causing events to take place which affected the rights and the honour of neutrals. Complaints were frequently made, and justly too, against both of the great powers which were at variance. In addition to the fact that there was the greater ground of complaint against Great Britain, the popular sympathy naturally ran in favour of the nation which had been the ally of the United States in their struggle for independence; and the popular feeling as naturally went against that government with which that memorable contest had been so earnestly waged. Success after so long a war, and so much of suffering, could but leave the seeds of



future hostility. At length, in 1812, these ripened, under the fomenting causes of which we have been speaking, into an open war with Great Britain. It is one of the misfortunes of war that any issue, whether successful or not, leaves the parties in a state for which no advantage won by force of arms can fully compensate.

Lieutenant Taylor rose, in the first four years of his service, to the rank of captain. He was ordered for duty in the west, the uneasy movements of the Indian tribes in that part of our extended territory rendering the presence of a military force necessary. The military establishment of the United States is nearly always disproportioned to the requirements of the field in which the troops are called to act. The proper jealousy of a republic like ours is unfavourable to the support of a large standing army; and it would sometimes seem that the error of keeping too little force afoot is committed in avoiding the opposite extreme. But officers and men, required to perform what would almost seem impossibilities, are thus inured to activity and hardship, and trained, even in a time of nominal peace, to most active duty. We have nothing remarkable to record of the period between 1808 and 1812. Taylor's evident capacity, his

rigid observance of the requirements of duty, and his superior tact in discipline, caused his investment with the command of Fort Harrison, in Indiana, a small, but important post, situated in the midst of hostile tribes of Indians. Here was obtained his first success, for which President Madison conferred on him the rank of major, by brevet. The particulars of that engagement we reserve for another chapter; and will in this give our readers an idea of the meaning of the term "brevet," which will occur more than once again in the life of the gallant Taylor.

The number of officers in the United States' service is regulated and determined by law. There cannot, therefore, be more than a certain number of regularly commissioned officers. As these die, or are killed, or resign, the vacancies which occur are filled by the regular promotion of subordinates. The word "brevet" is French, and signifies commission or appointment. But the brevet major in the United States or British service draws pay and really ranks according to his regular commission, his brevet being a compliment to his courage or qualities, which merit more than the regular routine of service permits should be conferred. In the United States, however, by act of Congress, greater

advantages attach to a brevet commission than in any other country; and since 1818 such commissions can only be conferred with the consent of the Senate. Brevet officers in the United States' service, when taking rank according to their brevet commissions, draw pay and emoluments accordingly; and they take this rank under certain circumstances which it is not necessary to specify. It is sufficient to repeat that the brevet is one of the most gratifying tokens which a meritorious officer can receive of the approval of his government.

## CHAPTER III.

Necessary Enmity of the Indians, and its causes — Consequences of admitting Indians as Allies—Tecumseh and Olliwachica—Character of Tecumseh—Pretensions of the Prophet—War of 1812—Captain Taylor at Fort Harrison—Indian Night-Attack—Firing of the Block-house—Gallant and successful Defence.



THE aboriginal inhabitants of this continent have always been troublesome neighbours to the European settlers and their descendants. This fact arises in part from the necessity of the case, and in part from the injudicious and improper course of the whites in their intercourse with the red men :—and this charge of imprudence and wrong, while in much it applies to governments, in more is to be urged against individuals. The savage mind is unable to take in the idea of national responsibility, as civilized nations understand it, and cannot separate the character of a nation from that of the individuals with whom they are brought in direct contact. In the very nature of things it has necessarily been the case that the Indians have suffered wrong from bad white borderers. It is un-

fortunate that bad men everywhere make more impression than good; and the venal, corrupt, and licentious among pioneer settlers, have always caused more evil among the Indians than the efforts of the government, or of conscientious and just individuals, could avert or efface.

A great and prolific source of evil on this continent was sown long ago, when European powers were struggling against each other for the possession of it. The French armed and led the Indian against the English, and the English enlisted the savage against the French. These terrible allies gave to war in this country a most ferocious aspect. Where havoc was cried, and such dogs of war were let loose, neither age nor sex was spared, and barbarities were committed at the relation of which the very blood is chilled. These cruel proceedings were earnestly expostulated against, and condemned by white teachers—but what availed words of remonstrance while the pale-face warriors recognised the Indian braves, as brother soldiers, with all their ferocity? And there was still another adverse circumstance against the humanizing of Indian warfare. If the savages in the service of one European nation committed atrocities, the other nation permitted, if they did not encourage the Indians in

their pay, to do the same thing by way of retaliation.

As the aborigines were thus instructed by Europeans, to take up arms, now against this party and now against that, for the service of foreign intruders ; and as in these wars the savages found themselves in successive years required to recognise one nation, and then another, as their "white brothers," and one king, and then another, as their "great father;" and as at last the whole of this somewhat involved system of fraternity was thrown into inextricable confusion, by the letting loose of the savages against the Anglo-American inhabitants, whom the British had always before taught them were their brothers in especial, it is no wonder that native directness drew its own conclusion from these tangled premises. The shrewder among them had always regarded the whites in these divisions as but assisting the Indians against themselves. The savages warred against the whites with their whole hearts, and were always ready to receive the alliance of one part of the common enemy against another. It mattered little, in the main, under whose banner they skulked in the woods to fall upon the border settlements, murder stragglers, and dash out the brains of helpless infants and their mothers ; and while

they might act thus under foreign approval against a part, they undoubtedly argued that their savage but deep-rooted ideas of patriotism, would justify them to do on their own account what they had done for others, and carry on war against the whole.

In the year 1806 two far-seeing and crafty Indians arose,—men whose talents, had they been placed where their powers could have been developed in civilized diplomacy and statesmanship, would have left their mark upon the age. They were Shawnees, and twin brothers. Their names are undoubtedly familiar to our readers, one being Tecumseh, or “The Crouching Tiger,” the other Olliwachica, or “The Loud Voice,” generally called the Prophet. These men, fully understanding the character of their race, set about improving native shrewdness, patriotism, ignorance, prejudice, courage and superstition;—for all these traits were made available, to effect a grand rally and union of the divided tribes, against the whites, whom they regarded as the common enemy.

Tecumseh was bold and sagacious—a tiger indeed in the field, and a serpent in the council. He knew when to dare, and when to affect submission; and possessed, in fine, all the charac-

teristics of the Indian warrior, with other traits which apparently belong to a more civilized and artificial state of society. As an exemplification of this, he played a part which is exceedingly rare among Indian warriors, who are generally ambitious of individual fame, and jealous of rival distinction, even when the good of the whole is to be consulted by deference to the claims of one. Tecumseh was content to be the herald and missionary of his brother the Prophet, and, with the great ultimate end which he held in view, to make himself but the shadow and messenger of one whom he declared everywhere to be the especial delegate and messenger of the Great Spirit. He travelled from tribe to tribe, asserting the wonderful and supernatural qualities of his twin brother, and filled the Indian country with the fame of one who in ability for dissimulation, and power of fascination over his believers, exceeded even the arch impostor Mahomet. This may at first seem very exaggerated language. But the Arab had comparatively small odds to contend against, and when success commenced, the prestige of former victories carried him forward to greater and greater triumphs; while the Prophet, with a hopeless cause and invincible opposition matched against him from the beginning, still retained his



followers and his influence, in spite of defeat upon defeat, and discomfiture after discomfiture. With the same advantages that Mahomet possessed, Olliwachica would have founded as powerful a dynasty.

The Prophet was a warrior as well as his brother, and as an orator was his superior. Thus in the triple capacity of warrior, orator, and magician, or medicine-man, with the support of Tecumseh, it will easily be understood how he obtained his immense influence. The powers which he claimed to possess by the direct favour of the Great Spirit were next to infinite. He appealed first to the Indian pride of race, by declaring that he was sent to abolish innovations, and to put away from among the Indians the religion of the whites, which he craftily admitted the Great Spirit approved among the Europeans, but had established another for the Red Men, of which he was the Prophet. He declaimed against whiskey-drinking and other vices, and urged the Indians as one great family to come into union. All these instructions he supported with incantations and pretended miracles; the latter growing in importance, of course, as the relators were farther from their reported scene. His immediate followers were said to be living in luxury

and plenty. He could produce from the earth, in an instant a pumpkin as large as a wigwam, and cause an ear of corn to shoot up, sufficient to feed a dozen men. He could foretell future events—and to crown all declared himself invulnerable to the assaults and shots of his enemies; he promised the same security to all who would faithfully obey him. Such were his pretensions, and they were credited by an immense number of his countrymen. No matter, if those who visited him did often retire disgusted and perhaps half-starved. There were continual arrivals to supply the places of deserters, and the very deserters themselves, such is the power of superstition over the savage and untutored mind, only went to a distance to have their faith re-established. Literally true is it in such instances that “distance lends enchantment to the view.”

But incantations were not the only diabolical means to which the brothers resorted to establish their great confederacy. Chiefs who were found to be intractable were removed by their machinations, and it grew to be dangerous for an Indian to oppose the Prophet's friends. Just at this time too, when war was apprehended between the United States and Great Britain, the “war talk” did not fail to reach the quick ear of the Indian. Nor, if we may

credit the admissions of the savages, and the indication of such a fact which often presented themselves, were the British Indian agents and traders, slow to avail themselves of circumstances which would become of high importance to them, in the case of war between the two countries. The event indeed, may be said to prove the fact; for when war broke out between England and America, the rumblings which had long been heard exploded in open hostility.

We shall not pursue the subject of the Indian wars of the west farther than is necessary to the elucidation of the life of Taylor. It was to such a field as we have been describing, and amid such artifices, commotions and alarms as it presented, that he was sent to acquire that knowledge of Indian warfare and strategy which made him afterward so efficient a commander in Florida. In June, 1812, war was declared between the United States and Great Britain, and the fall of Detroit in the month of August opened immediately an undisguised border war on the part of the Indians.

Captain Taylor, while in command at Fort Harrison, perceived in the beginning of September indications of the approach of the hostile Indians. Two young men, who had been sent a short dis-

tance from the fort on the 3d of September, failed to return. Guns were heard in the direction in which they were at work. On the 4th a party having been sent out to seek them, discovered their dead bodies, with the scalp removed, as is the universal custom of the Indian warriors. Great precautions had before been taken against surprise, and this circumstance, indicating the certainty that the enemy was lurking near, caused the vigilance of the garrison to be doubled; and the event proved that the extraordinary measures which had been taken to guard against a surprise were not uncalled for.

The nominal garrison was fifty men,—of whom twenty only were in a condition for duty, and of these several were barely convalescent, the post being an exceedingly unhealthy one. Captain Taylor himself had but just recovered from a severe attack of fever. In addition to the circumstance of the murder of the two men, Captain Taylor had his apprehensions of dangers strengthened by the movements and reports of the professedly friendly Indians, some of whom assured him that the Prophet's party were about to commence hostilities. On the evening of the 4th a party of the Prophet's people arrived with a white flag, and threw out such

intimations of an intended friendly visit the next morning, as they no doubt hoped would put the garrison off its guard.

The fort was small, and not very strongly built. The works consisted of an upper and lower block-house, and two bastions. The barracks formed part of the defences, and adjoined the lower block-house. Captain Taylor inspected the men's arms, finding them all in good order, and served out sixteen rounds of cartridges per man. As sentinels could not be posted in sufficient numbers to see every part of the works, the officers of the guard were instructed to walk round on the inner side during the whole night, in order to guard against any attempt at surprise.

At about eleven o'clock Captain Taylor, who as we have stated was an invalid, was awakened by the gun of one of the sentinels. Instantly rushing out, he ordered the men to their posts. In a moment more the cry of fire was raised—and all was terror and confusion. Two of the stoutest men in the garrison, on whom the captain had counted particularly, jumped the picket at the first alarm, and fled—and most of the men gave themselves up for lost. The building fired was the lower block-house, in which was stored the property of the contractor,

including most unfortunately a quantity of whiskey. This mischievous enemy, a fit ally for those without, took fire and baffled every effort to subdue the conflagration. The raging of the flames, the howling of several hundred Indians, now feeling sure of their prey, the cries of a number of women and children who had taken shelter in the fort, and above all the despondency of the men, made the captain's position one in which he might indeed have been forgiven for want of presence of mind.

But Zachary Taylor was made of sterner stuff. He took in at a glance all the difficulties of the dilemma, and saw the only hope of safety. The discharges of guns on both sides had, during this time been continual; but the men who had been ordered to bring water to extinguish the fire, worked, either from debility or hopelessness of success, with neither resolution nor activity. Captain Taylor perceived that by throwing off that part of the roof of the barracks which was connected with the block-house, the row of buildings might be saved on which depended the salvation of the garrison—for the barrack-walls, as before stated, formed a part of the defences. Of this he succeeded in convincing the men, and with Dr. Clark at their head, a party ascended the roof, despite a shower of bullets

DEFENCE OF FORT HARRISON.







from the enemy, to whom they were exposed by the light of the burning block-house, and in less than a minute, they threw off as much of the roof as was necessary. One man only was killed in performing this feat, and two were wounded.

Encouraged by this success, and above all inspired with firmness by perceiving that they had a commander whose self-possession was equal to the emergency, the able-bodied men used such exertions that though the barracks were several times on fire, those buildings were not only saved, but the gap made by the burning of the block-house was, during the night, filled up by the erection of a temporary breastwork, as high as a man's head. Those of the garrison who were unable, from the debility of sickness, to work in this laborious service, directed a constant fire upon the Indians from the other block-house, and from the bastions. For seven hours the Indians kept up a heavy fire of ball, and showers of arrows; but only one man was killed beside the man on the roof, and none were wounded except the two injured there. Of the two men who jumped the picket at the beginning of the attack, one was cut to pieces by the Indians before he was two hundred yards from the garrison. The other returned to the fort about an hour before day, and

begged to be let in at the gate. Captain Taylor did not know his voice, and suspecting a stratagem of the enemy, ordered him to be fired upon; but Dr. Clark, who happened fortunately to recollect him, directed him to lie down close to the pickets, and after day-light he was admitted, very badly wounded by the Indians, and having fared much worse than if he had remained and performed his duty.

The Indians kept up their fire till six o'clock on the morning of the fifth, when they withdrew beyond the reach of the guns of the fort. The extent of their loss was never ascertained, as they removed all their dead. Their disappointment at failing to carry a place of so little apparent capacity to resist an attack, must have been great; and they consoled themselves in their vexation by shooting the settlers' horses and hogs in sight of the fort, but out of reach of the guns; and by driving off the cattle belonging to the army and the citizens.

## CHAPTER IV.

Destitution of the Garrison.—Departure of the Indians.—Failure to send Despatches. — Arrival of Relief. — Commendation of Major General Hopkins.—Brevet commission of Major.—Avoidance of Ostentation.—Amusing Anecdote.—Promotion to the rank of Colonel.



THE loss of that part of the defences which the block-house had constituted before its destruction, was supplied by putting up a strong row of pickets, the materials for which were obtained by taking down the guard-house. But the destruction of the provisions which the block-house contained, and of the cattle driven off by the enemy, could not be easily remedied ; and the garrison were forced to be content with green corn, and such other make-shifts for food as their situation permitted. It was a dreary prospect. The Indians who had been on professedly friendly terms, and in the habit of visiting the garrison, were among the party that assailed the fort. Captain Taylor recognised some familiar voices in the orders given by the enemy during the night ; and when

day-light came, several of the treacherous fellows were seen and recognised among the assailants.

The Indians remained in sight of the fort through the whole of the day after the first attack ; but they did not a second time attempt it. On the sixteenth of the month there arrived to the relief of the fort, a reinforcement of six hundred mounted men and five hundred infantry—a relief the more gratifying than it was unexpected. For nearly a week after the attack Captain Taylor forbore to attempt to forward despatches, as he was so watched by the Indians that to send with any hope of success would have too much weakened his small garrison, and he preferred to trust to the arrival of assistance without his inviting it. On the tenth, none having arrived, he attempted to send by the river, at night, but the crafty savages had built a fire on the bank and established a watch, with a canoe ready to pursue and intercept any messenger, and the men were compelled to return. It is difficult to conceive a position of more tantalizing peril and distress than was here presented. A sickly garrison, with the means of bare sustenance only, and those liable at any moment to be cut off; and hordes of savages skulking in readiness perhaps to renew the attack ; while their vigilance effectually

prevented any transmission of the news of the danger and distress of the isolated band to those who might relieve it. But General Taylor's despatches in reference to the battle and to his subsequent wants, show the same modest simplicity and absence both of bravado and of exaggeration of his difficulties which have marked his later papers. For a captain of twenty-two years of age, his presence of mind in danger, and his fortitude under threatening difficulties, were most remarkable.

The defence of Fort Harrison drew from Major General Hopkins, in his despatch to Governor Shelby, the warmest praise which it was possible for words to convey. "The firm and almost unparalleled defence of Fort Harrison by Captain Zachary Taylor has raised for him a fabric of character not to be affected by my eulogy." In the subsequent operations during the war of 1812 the duty of Taylor did not lead him into any scenes where he had opportunity of individually distinguishing himself before the eyes of the nation. He served under General Hopkins in the movements against the Indians which resulted in the destruction of several of their towns, and in the crippling of their resources and intimidation of their daring. On reporting these operations General Hopkins speaks of Taylor

as "rendering prompt and efficient aid in every instance." The sense which the public entertained of his merits was well expressed by President Madison in conferring upon him the rank of major by brevet, dating from the day of the repulse of the Indians at Fort Harrison.

Although Major Taylor did not, from this date to the time of the Florida war, take the public admiration again by storm, he formed, by his steady improvement, a character for efficiency which has caused the government on many occasions since to prefer him for stations of peculiar difficulty and danger. And in the long interval between the peace of 1812 and the date of his service in Florida in 1837, the character of the man was becoming established by an improvement of the traits which have been mentioned as marking him while yet a boy. Ever avoiding ostentation, he had the rare faculty of admitting all to a proper familiarity with him, without permitting it to degenerate into contempt. The sobriquet of "Rough and Ready," conferred upon him by his soldiers, is by no means to be interpreted as indicating any affected disregard for the courtesies of life, or any assumption of the foppery of dishabille. He is plain, but not shabby in his dress and appointments, and seldom appears

in uniform, except on occasions of review. In a word, his ideas of discipline are not those of a dandy, but of a soldier; and he adapts his mode of dress and living to the time and to the demand of the service.

An amusing instance of this is given in a sketch of his life recently published;\* and although the anecdote refers to a later period of his career, it may be inserted here. A gentleman formerly in the army, and attached to Taylor's regiment, and personally well acquainted with him, visited Fort Jesup in Louisiana, while Taylor was stationed at that post; but was informed that his friend was a hundred miles distant, attending a court-martial. The gentleman, walking one morning, met in his ramble a dark man jogging along toward the camp on a donkey, with whom, as is the western custom on meeting a stranger, he exchanged salutations. The figure of the rider was so unique that the other was induced to take particular notice of him. He was dressed in a coarse bombazine frock coat, and drab breeches, with the bottoms tucked in at the tops of his boots. He had a black cravat tied loosely round his neck, and his broad coarse straw hat, as the broad rim flapped up and down, showed

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\* Life of Major General Taylor, &c. By C. F. Powell.

a pair of lustrous black eyes, and his hair floating on the breeze. Both rider and animal looked very much jaded, and were covered with the dust and mud of a long journey. On the gentleman's return to camp, he heard of the arrival of the commanding officer, and was not a little astonished to hear that he had passed his old commander Taylor without recognising him. The two friends laughed heartily over the circumstance.

Ridiculous, however, as this picture seems, it is not such a burlesque as a donkey ride of one hundred miles in regimentals would have been. It is the characteristic of a well-balanced mind to accommodate itself to circumstances, and to pay trifles no attention which can make them interfere with essentials. The habit of application and constant industry leads our hero to be inattentive to matters which make up the life of an idle man; and we can pardon him if, in the self-reliance of a rank which owes nothing to favour and nothing to patronage, but has been fairly earned by hard service, he does take some pride in showing such a contempt for appearances as would be a hazardous experiment in a man of less actual claim to respect. Having the essentials, he can afford to despise the accidents. To this day he neglects the insignia of rank to



which he is entitled, and follows, in a natural and unaffected manner, the republican simplicity to which the turn of his mind inclines him. To be anything else than what he is, would be assuming a character, and playing a part.

Captain Taylor was, in 1832, raised to the regular or lineal rank of colonel. We must now follow him to a new field, in which he showed that although for a long time lost to the public eye, his absence from notoriety had been improved in perfecting the soldier; and that in the interval of peace he had, by assiduous attention to his profession, prepared himself to justify the high expectations which those who knew him entertained.

## CHAPTER V.

The Florida War. — Its wearisome character. — Fruitless Heroism of our Troops. — Colonel Taylor ordered to the Peninsula. — Failure of the Cherokee Mediation. — Colonel Taylor receives orders to take Active Measures. — Moves in execution of that Duty. — Events of the March. — He reaches the Encampment of the Indian chief Alligator. — Preparations for an Engagement.



THE next scene of the active services of Colonel Taylor was in Florida. Of all the troublesome contests which the United States have been compelled to wage with the Indians, this Florida war was perhaps the most irksome. The nature of the country, while it afforded the best opportunities for the concealment of the enemy, is such as to render military movements next to impossible; and such operations as can be conducted must lack the greater part of the superiority which, on even ground, a disciplined and well-appointed army possesses over a savage foe. Indeed, Florida may be styled the Indian's own battle ground. To-day the enemy would be reported subdued and submissive, ready to "come in,"

and consent to the removal, which it was evident could alone secure peace to the Territory. Tomorrow the news would be that some indomitable warrior, with an unpronounceable Indian name with a terrific signification, still held back ; and that without his submission all the rest availed nothing. The public ear was distracted with continual and contradictory rumours. Sickness thinned the ranks of the army ; ambush and surprise cut off the gallant soldiers ; sudden forays rendered the territory for all the purposes of settlement absolutely useless ; and terrible murders of families under the most ingenious inventions of savage cruelty, filled the ear of the nation with horrors. The gallantry and courage of our noble army seemed to serve no other purpose, than to furnish tragical episodes in the tale of the protracted and wearisome contest. The hammocks and everglades will live in future story as the scenes of desperate heroism, labouring in vain against inevitable destruction. The futile but brilliant exploits of the heroes who met death amid the hammocks and the everglades, will be remembered when improvement shall have so changed the face of the peninsula, that it will be hard to realize the fact that there ever was a time when its interior was deemed inaccessible.

To this difficult field Colonel Taylor was transferred early in the war; and to his duties here he applied the results of his long experience in Indian warfare, and the habits of incessant diligence, circumspectness and prudence which marked his character as a commanding officer. Our limits do not permit us to follow him in all his movements; nor would it be an interesting narrative, since it would involve a series of tedious marchings and counter-marchings, made in the vain effort to surround and capture the most artful bands of fugitives who ever eluded pursuit. The perseverance of the Florida Indians in resistance to the measures of the United States government, and the manner in which they succeeded so long in eluding the force sent against them, baffling commander after commander, and starting up, like the heads of hydra, in the very places where it was thought they were effectually cut off, is indeed one of the most remarkable passages of Indian history. But a specimen of its details will suffice for the whole; and this we will collect from the despatches of Colonel Taylor.

In 1837-8, hopes were entertained of bringing the war to a close through the mediation of a delegation of Cherokees, representing the Indians who had removed west of the Mississippi. These

Cherokee ambassadors were brought to Florida in the belief that their observation of the power and resources of the United States, and of the folly of the Indians in contending against such vast odds, together with the report they would make of the comfort of their new location, would induce the Seminoles to forego further efforts to resist, and to surrender themselves, without additional effusion of blood, or expense of treasure. But it seemed as if the introduction of the new agent only produced a new series of baffling manœuvres. The Seminoles would promise fair, and make professions with every appearance of sincerity, only to evade the fulfilment of their word when the time arrived to put their professions to the proof. The United States government was mortified to find that all these overtures had only resulted in yielding to the crafty hostiles a respite, under the benefit of which the Florida war, which had been pronounced "ended," would, by the benefit of the rest and recovery which the Indians had enjoyed, be still further protracted than if no negotiations had been attempted.

At length, on the 19th of December, all hopes through the Cherokee delegation being at an end, Colonel Taylor received orders to proceed without

delay against any portion of the enemy he might hear of, within striking distance. The chief Aviaka, or Sam Jones, after dallying and evading direct answers, had determined, at the head of the Micasukies, to contend to the last; and was encamped at some point in the interior with all the force he could collect, rallying around him such of the Indians as could be reached by influence or by intimidation.

On the 20th, the next day after receiving his orders, Colonel Taylor was in motion. Leaving an adequate force to defend his depôt, he left Fort Gardner, south of the Withlacoochee, with between ten and eleven hundred men, exclusive of officers. Among these were seventy Delaware Indians. Of the Shawnees, another professedly friendly tribe, the greater part who were with Colonel Taylor had been detached, and the rest refused to accompany the expedition, some under the plea of sickness, and others that they had no moccasins. In the enlistment of Indians against Indians in the Florida war, the red men were almost invariably very dilatory and inefficient, if not treacherous allies. For their unwillingness to aid, we can certainly not censure them; and their treachery even, in such a

cause, it is hard to condemn without very much palliation.

Colonel Taylor moved in a south-easterly direction toward the centre of the peninsula, which, in this part of the territory, is divided by the river Kissimme, connecting Lake Okee-Chobee with a smaller lake to the north of it. How little is known of this country may be judged from the fact that the sources of the St. Johns, the largest river in Florida, which takes its rise in the vicinity of these lakes, have not yet been precisely determined. Colonel Taylor moved in this direction because he knew a portion of the hostile Indians lurked there; and because if General Jessup drove the Micasukies from the eastern side of the peninsula, across the Kissimme, it would be in his power to intercept them in their retreat. He expected also to meet parties of Indians who had proposed to give themselves up, but were very slow in coming in, willing apparently to wait for the last hope of escaping the alternative. These parties he trusted to overawe, and, indeed, to oblige to surrender at once. And lastly, he desired to establish on the Kissimme another post, forty or fifty miles in advance of his head-quarters, in order to open a communication with Colonel Smith, who was operating on the Caloosahatchee.

It was also of the last importance to obtain and perfect such a knowledge of the country as should put him above dependence on Indian guides. The considerations by which the expedition was planned mark the skilful tactitian, and the activity with which the movement was carried forward, the bold warrior.

Late in the evening of the first day's march, Colonel Taylor met the Indian chief Jumper and a part of his band, including women, children, and negroes, in all sixty-three souls, conducted by a half-breed Shawnee, Captain Parks. Jumper and his troop were sent on to head-quarters; and on the next morning, Parks accompanying him, Colonel Taylor proceeded on his march. He sent three friendly Seminoles ahead as scouts, to gain intelligence. He also detached one battalion of Missouri volunteers under Lieutenant Colonel Price, to pick up any stragglers that might fall in his way, to encamp three miles in advance, and to give notice of any occurrence important for the commander to know.

Through these arrangements Colonel Taylor received information, during the early part of the night, of a camp fifteen miles distant, at which the chief Alligator had been a few days before. This



chief had gone from his camp with a part of his family, seeking, as he said, to detach his relations from the Micasukies, in order that they should surrender with him. But there were remaining at the camp a few families who were ready to give themselves up, and would wait there until the army came to take them, unless they should in the mean time be forcibly carried off by the Micasukies; who were reported to be encamped at no great distance from them.

Colonel Taylor put himself at the head of a detachment of mounted men, and at midnight pushed on for the Indian encampment, directing the infantry to follow early in the morning. Such is his indefatigable pursuance of his duty; sparing himself no fatigue and no privation where the exigencies of the service require promptitude, and delegating to no one such duties as he considers may be best performed by himself. Soon after daylight he took possession of the encampment, which he found had remained undisturbed. It contained one old man and two young ones, and several women and children, amounting in all to twenty-two persons.

The old Indian gave Colonel Taylor information that the Micasukies were watching for an attack in

their encampment, near Lake Okee-Chobee, about twenty miles distant, on the other side of the Kissimme. He also said that Alligator was very anxious to separate his people from the Micasukies, and bring them in with him. Colonel Taylor then despatched the old Indian to Alligator, with instructions to tell him, if he was sincere in his desire to surrender, to join him where the trail in which he was crossed the Kissimme, at which place he should halt for the night. When the infantry arrived, Colonel Taylor moved on to the point designated, and halted.

At a little before midnight the old Indian returned, bringing an equivocal and evasive message from Alligator, who seemed to desire to avoid compliance with the terms offered. Thus at every step were the commanders in the Florida war balked with the double-dealing of the Indians. The messenger professed to have met Alligator by accident, and there can be little doubt that, with the privity of the Indians in the camp, the chief was lurking near, and cognizant of all that transpired. The old man gave the information also that the Micasukies were still where they had been for some days, and awaiting the approach of the United States troops.

These reports, and others which came in after, had very much the air of a challenge. The enemy were evidently disposed, having chosen their ground, to put all upon the hazard of an engagement. Colonel Taylor, to use his own language, "determined at once to indulge them as soon as practicable." But before marching he laid out a small stockade, for the protection of a future dépôt, according to his original intention. In order that he might move with the greater celerity, and disappoint any fugitive fancies which the Indians should still entertain, he deposited here his heavy luggage, including artillery; for in the swamps and everglades it was necessary often to forego the advantages of this arm of the service.

A suitable guard was left at the dépôt, together with a number of the sick and disabled infantry. A portion of the friendly Indians who had come thus far, now discovered that they could go no farther. The terror of meeting their friends in fight—perhaps shame and a natural hesitancy—deterred them. The old Indian prisoner, though very reluctant to go, was taken along as a guide, and Colonel Taylor crossed the Kissimme. Early the next morning a deserted encampment of Alligator was reached, and afforded evidence that it must have

been the resting-place of several hundred persons; but Alligator himself and his immediate followers were not to be found. Concealed, however, in a neighbouring hammock, was an encampment containing four young men and one old one, who on being discovered raised a white flag as a signal of peace and submission. The men were seized—the women and children made their escape into the swamp, where no steps were taken to pursue them.

The men were Seminoles, and claimed to be friendly. As was usually the case when in this stage of the war Indians were caught, they were just on the point of coming in; and were only waiting to cure some beef which they had recently killed. Colonel Taylor, though with little faith in their promises, released the old man, who engaged to collect the women and children, and conduct them to Captain Munroe, the officer in charge of the post just established on the Kissimme. At this stage of his progress Colonel Taylor had no leisure to pursue the fugitives, nor could he have been encumbered with such prisoners. He also released the other old man who had thus far been their unwilling guide; and with the four young men just captured, proceeded in the direction of the camp of the Mickasukies.

Between two and three in the afternoon, Colonel Taylor reached a dense cypress swamp, which it was necessary to cross. Here would have been a place affording the enemy every facility for repulsing the advance; and the four men who acted as guides warned Colonel Taylor that in this place an attack might be expected. Preparations were made accordingly, but no enemy appeared, and the long day's work was closed by crossing the swamp. Two Indian spies were encountered, one mounted, and the other on foot. The latter was secured, and confirmed the information before received of the position of Sam Jones, with the Micasukies. He also stated that a large body of the Seminoles were encamped near the Micasukies, and that John Cohua, Co-a-coo-chee, Alligator, and no doubt other chiefs, were with them.

The night must have been an anxious one for Colonel Taylor. Here he was, at last, within a few miles of the renowned Sam Jones and his warriors. Alligator and the other Seminoles, who had so often promised to "come in," that the phrase had become a joke in the ranks, were, from all indications, about to join their force with the Micasukies; if indeed they had not already done so. The army had reached this point with incredible

fatigue, and moved with such expedition as to compel the relinquishment of their artillery. That in none of the exposed situations in which they had been placed, they had been attacked, was either an indication that Colonel Taylor's precautions left the Indians no hope of making an impression, or it was an evidence that the enemy was saving and concentrating his strength for a last and desperate struggle. Colonel Taylor must have admired the desperate courage of the foe, thus to summon his forces for a trial of such imminent consequence. He is too good a soldier not to respect courage in a Red Man or Pale Face. With all the savage properties of the Indian, there is a stern sublimity in his resolution; and a thought of sorrow and pity must cross the mind at the melancholy fate of a foe, who, however he may be considered, cannot be despised.

We have been thus particular in relating the events of this march, in order that our readers may appreciate the difficulties of a Florida campaign. Add to what we have here described the sudden shot from a covert, the frequent death of a straggler in the sight of comrades, unable to resist or intercept the unseen foe; and the sternly presented resistance where the ground afforded cover, though

but for an instant—and you have a faint picture of the difficulties, danger and hardships of the Florida war :—a war for which our gallant army has scarcely received that commendation to which their arduous services so justly entitle them,—and which would undoubtedly have been freely bestowed if the same valour and devotion had been exercised on a fair field, in conflict with a civilized opponent.

## CHAPTER VI.

Attack on the camp of the Indians—Fall of Colonel Gentry—Gallant conduct of the fourth and sixth Infantry—Terrible Slaughter of Officers—Flight of the Enemy—Care of the Wounded—Reflections on the scene—Return to Fort Gardner—Colonel Taylor brevetted Brigadier General—Close of his Services in Florida—Relieved by Brigadier General Armistead.



At daylight on the next morning the army resumed its march, and reached another cypress swamp, on the borders of which was a deserted encampment of the Seminoles. It must have been abandoned in great haste, as the fires were still burning, and beef was lying about upon the ground. At this place, as it was but reasonable to apprehend an attack might be intended, the troops were disposed in order of battle, but no enemy appeared, and the army crossed over the swamp at 11 o'clock, A. M. After crossing the swamp, the command captured an Indian warrior, who pointed to a dense hammock, about a mile distant, in which he said the hostile Indians were waiting to give battle to the advancing army. The



account of the engagement we present in the Colonel's own language.

“At this place the final disposition was made to attack them, which was in two lines; the volunteers under Gentry, and Morgan's spies, to form the first line in extended order, who were instructed to enter the hammock, and, in the event of being attacked and hard pressed, were to fall back in rear of the regular troops, out of reach of the enemy's fire; the second line was composed of the 4th and 6th infantry, who were instructed to sustain the volunteers, the 1st infantry being held in reserve.

“Moving on in the direction of the hammock, after proceeding about a quarter of a mile, we reached the swamp which separated us from the enemy, three-quarters of a mile in breadth, being totally impassable for horse, and nearly so for foot, covered with a thick growth of saw-grass five feet high, about knee-deep in mud and water, which extended to the left as far as the eye could reach, and to the right to a part of the swamp and hammock we had just crossed, through which ran a deep creek. At the edge of the swamp all the men were dismounted, and the horses and baggage left under a suitable guard. Captain Allen was detached with the two companies of mounted infantry to ex-

amine the swamp and hammock to the right; and, in case he should not find the enemy in that direction, was to return to the baggage, and, in the event of his hearing a heavy firing, was immediately to join me.

— “After making these arrangements, I crossed the swamp in the order stated. On reaching the borders of the hammock, the volunteers and spies received a heavy fire from the enemy, which was returned by them for a short time, when their gallant commander, Colonel Gentry, fell, mortally wounded. They mostly broke, and instead of forming in the rear of the regulars, as had been directed, they retired across the swamp to their baggage and horses, nor could they be again brought into action as a body, although efforts were made repeatedly by my staff to induce them to do so.

“The enemy, however, were promptly checked and driven back by the 4th and 6th infantry, which in truth might be said to be a moving battery. The weight of the enemy’s fire was principally concentrated on five companies of the 6th infantry, which not only stood firm, but continued to advance until their gallant commander, Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, and his adjutant, Lieutenant Center, were killed; and every officer, with one exception,

as well as most of the non-commissioned officers, including the sergeant-major and four of the orderly sergeants, killed and wounded of those companies; when that portion of the regiment retired to a short distance and were again formed, one of these companies having but four members left untouched.

“Lieutenant Colonel Foster, with six companies, amounting in all to one hundred and sixty men, gained the hammock in good order, where he was joined by Captain Noel, with the two remaining companies of the 6th infantry, and Captain Gillam, of Gentry’s volunteers, with a few additional men, and continued to drive the enemy for a considerable time, and by a change of front separated his line, and continued to drive him until he reached the great lake Okee Chobee, which was in the rear of the enemy’s position, and on which their encampment extended for more than a mile. As soon as I was informed that Captain Allen was advancing, I ordered the first infantry to move to the left, gain the enemy’s right flank and turn it, which order was executed in the promptest manner possible; and as soon as that regiment got in position, the enemy gave one fire and retreated, being pursued by the 1st, 4th, and 6th, and some of the volunteers who had joined them, until near night, and until

these troops were nearly exhausted, and the enemy driven in all directions.

“The action was a severe one, and continued from half-past twelve until after three, P. M., a part of the time very close and severe. We suffered much, having twenty-six killed and one hundred and twelve wounded, among whom are some of our most valuable officers. The hostiles probably suffered, all things considered, equally with ourselves, they having left ten dead on the ground, besides, doubtless, carrying off many more, as is customary with them when practicable.

“As soon as the enemy were completely broken, I turned my attention to taking care of the wounded, to facilitate their removal to my baggage, where I ordered an encampment to be formed; I directed Captain Taylor to cross over to the spot, and employ every individual whom he might find there in constructing a small footway across the swamp; this, with great exertions, was completed in a short time after dark, when all the dead and wounded were carried over in litters made for that purpose, with one exception, a private of the 4th infantry, who was killed and could not be found.

“And here, I trust I may be permitted to say that I experienced one of the most trying scenes of my

BATTLE OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE.





life, and he who could have looked on it with indifference, his nerves must have been very differently organized from my own; besides the killed, there lay one hundred and twelve wounded officers and soldiers, who had accompanied me one hundred and forty-five miles, most of the way through an unexplored wilderness, without guides, who had so gallantly beaten the enemy, under my orders, in his strongest position, and who had to be conveyed back through swamps and hammocks, from whence we set out, without any apparent means of doing so. This service, however, was encountered and overcome, and they have been conveyed thus far,\* and proceeded on to Tampa Bay, on rude litters, constructed with the axe and knife alone, with poles and dry hides—the latter being found in great abundance at the encampment of the hostiles. The litters were conveyed on the backs of our weak and tottering horses, aided by the residue of the command, with more ease and comfort to the sufferers than I could have supposed, and with as much as they could have been in ambulances of the most improved and modern construction.”

The day after the battle was occupied in taking

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\* The despatch from which this is extracted is dated from Head Quarters, after the return.

care of the wounded, and burying the dead. On the morning of the 27th December, Colonel Taylor commenced his return, and reached Fort Gardner, whence he had started, on receiving the orders of General Jessup. A summary of the doings of the command of Colonel Taylor is given in his despatch as follows. It will be observed that the six weeks' work, embraces about four previous to the date at which begin our record of Colonel Taylor's movement upon Okee-Chobee.

“ This column, in six weeks, penetrated one hundred and fifty miles into the enemy's country, opened roads, and constructed bridges and causeways, when necessary, on the greater portion of the route, established two depôts, and the necessary defences for the same, and finally overtook and beat the enemy in his strongest position. The results of which movement and battle have been the capture of thirty of the hostiles, the coming in, and surrendering of more than one hundred and fifty Indians and negroes, mostly the former, including the chiefs Ou-la-too-chee, Tus-ta-nug-gee, and other principal men, the capturing and driving out of the country six hundred head of cattle, upwards of one hundred head of horses, besides obtaining a thorough knowledge of the country through which we ope-



rated, a greater portion of which was entirely unknown, except to the enemy."

The remaining part of Colonel Taylor's despatch is devoted to particularising the services of the officers and men. We regret that our limits do not permit that we should here record what is said in honour of the individuals and companies which distinguished themselves in this hard-fought engagement. Feeling tributes of praise are paid to Colonel Gentry of the Missouri volunteers, who died in a few hours after the battle ; to Lieutenant Colonel A. R. Thompson, who fell instantly dead at the head of his regiment, having previously received two severe wounds, which he disregarded ; and to Captain Van Swearingen, and Lieutenants Brooke and Center, whose lives were also among the price paid for the victory at Okee-Chobee.

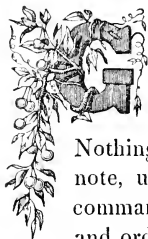
The results of the engagement were most important ; and it may indeed be said that it finished the Florida war. The appreciation of Colonel Taylor's services which the government and people entertained was marked by his brevet appointment of Brigadier General, dating from the battle of Okee-Chobee. After the battle, Colonel Taylor established himself at Fort Bassinger on the Kissimmee ; and in March, a temporary arrangement having

been made with the Seminoles to secure the country throughout the summer, Colonel Taylor was invested with the command of the frontier posts. In April, the whole command in Florida was turned over to Brigadier General Taylor, and General Jessup repaired to Washington to resume the duties of Quarter Master General.

General Taylor—by that title we shall henceforward designate him—was no less active after the battle of Okee-Chobee than before. Jumper, Alligator, and other chiefs and warriors came in at last, and the General skilfully made use of their influence, and of all other means which his active mind and ripe experience suggested, to bring about peace and reconciliation. In this laborious duty he remained until the beginning of the year 1840, when, at his request, he was relieved, and Brigadier General Armistead took his post. He had done well for his country in the arduous years which he spent amid the inhospitalities of a sickly region—and he had done humanity a vast service, in bringing to a close a most destructive and cruel condition of hostilities. Little could he imagine that a career was still before him in which his brilliant exploits would bring out in so strong a light as has been the case, the meritorious character of his previous life of comparatively obscure fortitude, labour, and self-denial.

## CHAPTER VII.

General Taylor ordered to the Southwest. — Movements of the Army of Occupation. — Depôt established at Point Isabel. — Arrival before Matamoras. — Mexican Proclamation. — Mexican newspapers. — Arrival of Ampudia at Matamoras. — Incitements to Desertion. — Deaths of Colonel Cross and Lieutenant Porter. — Answer of General Taylor to Ampudia's Summons.



GENERAL TAYLOR was now ordered to the Southern Department, including the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Nothing occurred which it is necessary to note, until General Taylor was placed in command of the "Army of Occupation," and ordered upon the duties which have led to his subsequent series of remarkable military exploits. The causes which occasioned the war with Mexico have been, and still are, the subject of earnest discussion among statesmen and politicians; and it is impossible in a work of this kind to review a long series of events, the commencement of which may be dated from the day when the Mexican state of Texas refused to accede to the revolution which

a military few had decreed; or to submit to a centralization that would destroy that respect for "state rights" which alone can make different commonwealths strong in a confederacy, while each separate state remains strong in itself. Separation of Texas from Mexico followed, and then annexation to the United States; and with the new state of Texas, this country assumed also her boundary disputes with the Mexicans. Indeed, the United States assumed much more. The Mexican authorities have never recognised the independence of Texas, or ceased to speak of it on certain occasions as a Mexican province, although incidental and unguarded recognitions of the separation of Texas from Mexico have been made.

The first position taken by General Taylor was at Corpus Christi, where he remained from August, 1845, to March, 1846; with instructions to repel any Mexican invasion of Texan territory. On the 11th of March, General Taylor moved westward, under orders from the government at Washington; and on the 20th reached the River Colorado, where indications of an intention to resist the movement were apparent on the part of the Mexicans. General Taylor was warned, in a formal note from the Mexican commander, that if he should cross the

Colorado, such a movement would be considered a declaration of war, and be followed by actual hostilities. The American commander made such dispositions as would enable him to force a passage, should it become necessary, and the passage of the Colorado was made on the 22d. No enemy appeared, however, and no obstruction; although Mexican troops had previously to this date crossed the Rio Grande. They were not met in force until the famous day of Palo Alto.

On the 24th, with a body of dragoons, General Taylor reached Point Isabel. Here he was met by a flag of truce from General Mejia, bearing a proclamation protesting against invasion. General Taylor deferred his reply to the 28th, when he said he would answer General Mejia at a post opposite Matamoras. The Mexicans in charge of Point Isabel abdicated that post, first firing the public buildings, and General Taylor took possession of it as his depôt, it being the nearest and most eligible position at which supplies could be landed from vessels in the Gulf for the operations of the army. On the 28th, according to his appointment with the Mexicans, General Taylor was opposite Matamoras, and encamped on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande—that river being the boundary claimed by

Texas. On his way to the river from Point Isabel, it is remarkable that General Taylor designated Resaca de la Palma as a place, the natural features of which indicated its probable selection as a battlefield. On the very day of his arrival, General Taylor sent General Worth and staff with despatches to the Mexican commanders, but after much parley and delay the reception of the despatches was refused by the Mexicans; and an opportunity to confer with the American Consul at Matamoras was also refused. We may observe here, that pending the movements which resulted in the occupation of Matamoras by the Americans, the consul was ordered away from his residence; to which he returned after the evacuation of Matamoras by the Mexican authorities.

The eyes of the whole people of the United States were now directed toward the camp of General Taylor, opposite Matamoras; but even up to the very hour when the news of the battle of Palo Alto was received, it was a subject of uncertainty what course the Mexicans would pursue in this dilemma. Their threats and proclamations would have left no doubt, had the authors of these tremendous missives been any other than Mexican officers. But these same generals had so often in the intes-

tine wars of their own country used the like fearful language of threatening against each other, and the encounters thus precluded had so generally ended as they began, in words, or in engagements ridiculously disproportioned to the note of preparation, that the people of the United States had learned to regard Mexican threats with a mingled smile of incredulity and pity.

General Taylor commenced at once erecting defences on the banks of the Rio Grande. General Canales, of the Mexican army, in a despatch to Ampudia, thus noticed the proceedings: "The Yankees are still in front of Matamoras, doing as the *monkeys* do. If we throw up a fortification, they throw up another." Whether the tone of contempt which the Mexican proclamations have displayed for the Americans be real or affected, it would be sufficiently amusing, only that the farce has been followed by tragedies so fearful. The rhodomontade of the Mexican newspapers can be better overlooked, but the result has been such as to make inflated gasconade like the following appear ridiculous and yet melancholy. After the interview between General Worth, on the American side, and General Vega, on the Mexican, the "Republican Monitor," of Matamoras, says, "The interview being over, the

fire was about to be opened by our batteries, this honour being disputed among the valiant soldiers who cover them ; but it was necessary to suspend a proceeding suggested by enthusiasm, inasmuch as, there being a pretty deep river intervening, the bayonets and spears, which are the arms most dreaded by the *contemptible enemy* in front, these unquestionable advantages over him could not be used ; and all that could be done was to exchange cannon-shots leading to a useless effusion of blood.

\* \* \* Although the enemy are superior in numbers, his excellency General Mejia and his soldiers, have shed patriotic tears on seeing the deep river which prevents them from cutting to pieces the perfidious invader."

Making all allowance for the peculiar genius of the Spanish language, and the style of expression which strikes the Anglo-Saxon ear as so ridiculous in the translation, the extract we have given appears sufficiently bombastic and foolish. It is to be regretted that American writers and speakers have not in all instances avoided the error which in the Mexicans seem so foolishly absurd ; but the exceptions to a generally magnanimous mode of treating the Mexicans are comparatively few. They have certainly shown themselves a most courageous enemy. As



to the despatches of General Taylor, they form a collection of papers remarkable for their modesty of language, and a terse brevity that yet leaves the narrative sufficiently perspicuous.

The Mexicans are no less Americans than the citizens of the United States, but we shall find it necessary to apply the term to our troops for convenience of expression. It is an event much to be regretted, whatever may have been its origin and causes, that the term American does not unite us all in one brotherhood of friendship, as it defines the geographical site of both countries. To resume our narrative: on the 11th of April, General Ampudia marched into Matamoras with a reported force of twenty-five hundred men, to reinforce the garrison of that post. Hostile demonstrations had meanwhile been continually proceeding on the side of Matamoras; and among the machinery used was one old as the practice of war—to wit, attempts to induce desertions from the American Army to the flag of the “magnanimous Mexican nation.” A copy of a proclamation addressed to soldiers of foreign birth in the American Army, and signed by General Ampudia, fell into the hands of General Taylor. Its inflated style fell on cold ears; and it was treated with contempt. Some desertions had,

however, occurred previously to the discovery of this missive; but a check was put upon those attempts by shooting the deserters, one man being killed by a sentinel after he had crossed the river, and was ascending the opposite bank. The plan of attempting to seduce by proclamations was however again resorted to, once if not oftener during the month of April, by Arista; and the second proclamation was drawn up with much more address and ingenuity than Ampudia's. The American soldiers are appealed to as men who enlisted in time of peace to serve a specific term, but whose obligation did not imply warring with Mexico! Such is the gist of the argument, and as we have intimated, it was very skilfully presented, notwithstanding the absurdity it conveys that soldiers, enlisting in time of peace, are released from serving in case the very exigency for which they are supported should happen.

The day before the arrival of Ampudia, Colonel Cross, the deputy quarter-master general, disappeared. Every effort was made to ascertain his fate, but it was not discovered until twelve days afterward, when his body was found, where he had been murdered. The Mexican officers attributed the deed, and probably with truth, to an irresponsi-

ble band of rancheros. This was the first life lost in the Mexican war. The next were those of Lieutenant Porter and three privates of a reconnoitring party, who were fired upon by the Mexicans, on their return to camp on the night of the 18th, after having during the day encountered and put to flight a large body of Mexicans. These events indicated the fact that the Mexicans had crossed the Rio Grande; and hostilities may from this date be considered to have commenced. Before proceeding to the stirring narrative which now awaits us, we shall conclude this chapter with General Taylor's answer to the summons of Ampudia to retreat beyond the Nueces within twenty-four hours. General Ampudia's summons was dated on the 12th April; and the answer of General Taylor, from which may be gathered the tenor of Ampudia's note, was immediately returned:

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION, }  
*Camp near Matamoras, Texas, April 12, 1846.* }

SEÑOR: I have had the honour to receive your note of this date, in which you summon me to withdraw the forces under my command from their present position, and beyond the river Nueces, until the pending question between our governments, relative to the limits of Texas, shall be settled.

I need hardly advise you that, charged as I am, in only a military capacity, with the performance of specific duties, I cannot enter into a discussion of the international question involved in the advance of the American army. You will, however, permit me to say that the government of the United States has constantly sought a settlement, by negotiation, of the question of boundary; that an envoy was despatched to Mexico for that purpose, and that up to the most recent dates said envoy had not been received by the actual Mexican government, if indeed he has not received his passports and left the republic. In the mean time, I have been ordered to occupy the country up to the left bank of the Rio Grande, until the boundary shall be definitively settled. In carrying out these instructions, I have carefully abstained from all acts of hostility, obeying, in this regard, not only the letter of my instructions, but the plain dictates of justice and humanity.

The instructions under which I am acting will not permit me to retrograde from the position I now occupy. In view of the relations between our respective governments, and the individual suffering which may result, I regret the alternative which you offer; but, at the same time, wish it understood that I shall by no means avoid such alternative,


leaving the responsibility with those who rashly commence hostilities. In conclusion, you will permit me to give you the assurance that on my part the laws and customs of war among civilized nations shall be carefully observed.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

Sr. Gen. D. PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Position of the Americans—Capture of Thornton's Command by the Enemy—General Taylor marches to Point Isabel with the main body of the Army—Sets out on his return—Encounters the Enemy, at Palo Alto—Brilliant Services of Major Ringgold—Mortal Wound of Captain Page—Close of the day—General Taylor's Despatch.



AFFAIRS had now reached a most critical point. The armies of the two republics stood committed; on the Mexican side by repeated threats, and on the American by the orders under which their commander acted. Neither side could retreat from the posture in which it was placed; and each appeared determined to leave to the other the responsibility of commencing actual hostilities. The following extract of a letter from General Taylor will give the reader an idea of the position of things on the 25th of April:

“Strong guards of foot and mounted men are established on the margin of the river, and thus efficient means have been adopted on our part to

prevent all intercourse. While opposite to us their pickets extend above and below for several miles, we are equally active in keeping up a strong and vigilant guard to prevent surprise, or attacks under disadvantageous circumstances. This is the more necessary, while we are to act on the defensive, and they are at liberty to take the opposite course whenever they think proper to do so. Nor have we been idle in other respects; we have a field-work under way, besides having erected a strong battery, and a number of buildings for the security of our supplies, in addition to some respectable works for their protection. We have mounted a respectable battery, four pieces of which are long eighteen-pounders, with which we could batter or burn down the city of Matamoras, should it become necessary to do so. When our field-work is completed—which will soon be the case—and mounted with its proper armament, five hundred men could hold it against as many thousand Mexicans. During the twenty-seven days since our arrival here, a most singular state of things has prevailed all through the outlines of the two armies, which, to a certain extent, have all the feelings as if there were actual war.

“Fronting each other, for an extent of more than

two miles, and within musket range, are batteries shotted, and the officers and men, in many instances, waiting impatiently for orders to apply the matches; yet nothing has been done to provoke the firing of a gun or any act of violence.

“Matamoras, at the distance we are now from it, appears to cover a large extent of ground, with some handsome buildings, but I would imagine the greater portion of them to be indifferent one-story houses, with roofs of straw, and walls of mud or unburnt brick. During peace the population is said to be five or six thousand, but it is now filled to overflowing with troops. Report says from five to ten thousand of all sorts, regular and militia. The number, I presume, is very much overrated.

“P. S.—Since writing the above, an engagement has taken place between a detachment of our cavalry and the Mexicans, in which we are worsted. So the war has actually commenced, and the hardest must fend off.”

General Arista had now superseded Ampudia in the command of the Mexicans; and had declared that he considered hostilities already commenced, and should prosecute them. It became certain that the Mexicans had crossed the Rio Grande at some point above Matamoras; and Captains Thorn-



ton and Hardie, with Lieutenants Kane and Mason, and sixty-one dragoons were sent to reconnoitre the enemy's movements. This party was surprised and surrounded about twenty-six miles from the camp, and Lieutenant Mason and nine men were killed. The whole party subsequently surrendered themselves prisoners of war; and it is to this affair that General Taylor alludes in the significant postscript to his letter.

The intentions of General Arista were now apparent. By throwing a considerable body of troops between the camp opposite Matamoras and Point Isabel, he designed to cut off all communication between General Taylor and his dépôt, and to overwhelm both positions by numbers. The supply of provisions in General Taylor's camp was sufficient only for eight days, and Point Isabel was twenty-seven miles distant. Captain Walker of the Texan Rangers arrived in camp from Point Isabel on the 29th, with four men, bringing the intelligence that on the day previous, with a detachment of his Rangers, he had encountered a force of between one and two thousand Mexicans, and after a brush with them he had fallen back to Point Isabel. From that place he had volunteered to bring General Taylor information, both of the posture of affairs

at the depôt and of the appearance of the route. Communication by the ordinary methods was now cut off; and General Taylor resolved to set out in person with the greater part of his force, and procure supplies. Leaving the works on the Rio Grande under command of Major Brown, with a regiment of infantry and two of artillery, in all about six hundred men, General Taylor on the 1st of May set out for Point Isabel, where he arrived on the 2d, without having seen a Mexican on the route.

On the 3d, the noise of cannonading was heard by General Taylor, and Captains May and Walker were sent out by him to gain information. On the 6th Captain Walker arrived with intelligence from the camp that the cannonading by the Mexicans had so far done no damage; and that Major Brown was reserving his fire and was in a position to maintain his post. Intelligence was now continually received of the presence of Mexican troops in heavy force. On the evening of the 7th General Taylor, with the main body of the little army of occupation, moved from Point Isabel and bivouacked for the night seven miles distant.

On the next day the march was resumed, and at noon the Mexican troops were discovered, occupy-

ing the road in heavy force, at Palo Alto. General Taylor halted to refresh his men, and form his line of battle. At two o'clock he took up his line of march in the direction of the enemy who opened the battle with their artillery, as the Americans approached. A heavy force of Mexican artillery occupied the road, forming one end of the line of battle, and infantry and artillery in alternate masses stretched across the plain to the distance of a mile or more. We may here remind the young reader that in military language the word "right" in a march means the head of a column, and when the line is formed for battle the same relative terms of right and left apply to the disposition of the troops. The Mexican "right" in the battle of Palo Alto was composed of the infantry and lighter artillery which stretched over the prairie; the "left" was formed of the heavy artillery which occupied the road; and the road, having prairie on one side, had on the other a dense and impassable thicket of chapparal.

In advancing against the enemy, Ringgold's artillery, and the 5th and 3d infantry, two eighteen-pounders, and the artillery battalion, which formed the "right" of the American army, advanced against the Mexican "left," which, as we have already said,

was composed of artillery posted in the road. The left of the American line was composed of the 4th and 8th infantry, and the light artillery of Captain Duncan. Ringgold's artillery opened a fire which told with terrible execution upon the enemy. An attempt of the Mexican cavalry, making a detour around the chapparal to attack the right flank, was discovered and checked by Lieutenant Ridgely with a detachment of Ringgold's artillery, the 5th infantry, and Captain Walker's volunteers, who received and repulsed the charge with great resolution, and inflicted severe loss upon the assailants. While this movement was going on, Major Ringgold was left with but two of his pieces, which he continued playing upon the enemy with the accuracy of a rifle, added to the awful power of a piece of ordnance; advancing within a hundred yards of the enemy, shifting and retrograding as the nature of the ground required. The infantry, meanwhile, stood firm, impatient for the order to charge, and cheering the terrible success of his battery, while they could take no part in the action, otherwise than by their enthusiastic expressions of sympathy. At length the services of the gallant Major were cut short with his life. A six-pound ball struck him, cutting the flesh from both thighs, and passing

through the shoulders of his horse. As he fell, Lieutenant Sherer offered to assist him, but he said: "No sir—let me stay—go on—you have enough to do." Major Ringgold survived his wounds sixty hours; and received the utmost attention that the nature of the circumstances would admit. The command of his company devolved on Lieutenant Shover, who skilfully managed the batteries during the rest of the day.

On the left of the American line, Captain Duncan's battery was doing great execution among the troops composing the enemy's right. With Captain Duncan on the extreme left, Ringgold's artillery on the right, and the heavy eighteen-pounders between them, the fire poured into the Mexican masses was most destructive. All this time the infantry had next to nothing to do, but to stand ready to sustain the batteries; themselves doing but little in the fray. To rest inactive, while ever and anon a comrade is killed or wounded; to stand without quailing and be shot at, without the excitement of answering the fire, is the very highest exercise of fortitude and heroism. Nor did the Mexican infantry fail to deserve the highest credit for the steadiness with which they endured the tremendous cannonading. The battle on both sides was almost entirely in the

hands of the artillery; and in this particular the action is one of the most remarkable on record.

The tall grass of the prairie had been fired by the artillery, and the smoke now concealed the two armies from each other and produced a temporary cessation of the action. Several changes now occurred. The enemy's artillery retreated from the murderous fire of Ringgold's battery, and the ground was occupied by the eighteen-pounders. The 4th infantry, which was ordered to support the eighteen-pound battery, and Captain May's squadron, suffered severely, and Captain Page, of the infantry, here met the wound which ended his life. He was struck down with such force as to prostrate the three men who stood next behind him. The whole of his lower jaw was shot away; and although he survived to reach his native country, it was only to yield up his last breath upon her soil.

In the mean time the battalion of artillery under Lieutenant Colonel Childs had been brought up to support the artillery on our right. A strong demonstration of cavalry was now made by the enemy against this part of our line, and the column continued to advance under a severe fire from the eighteen-pounders. The battalion was instantly formed in square, and held ready to receive the

charge of cavalry ; but when the advanced squadrons were within close range, a deadly fire of canister from the eighteen-pounders dispersed them. A brisk fire of small-arms was now opened upon the square, by which Lieutenant Luther of the second artillery was slightly wounded ; but a well-directed volley from the front of the square silenced all further firing from the enemy in this quarter. It was now nearly dark, and the action was closed on the right of the American line ; the enemy having been completely driven back from his position, and foiled in every attempt against our line.

While the above was going forward on our right, the enemy had made a serious attempt against the left of our line. Captain Duncan, with his usual quickness of perception, discovered and communicated to Lieutenant Belknap, commanding the brigade, the fact that the enemy was moving the entire cavalry and infantry force of his right wing upon our train in rear of the left of our line of battle, and that his battery could produce a more destructive effect upon the enemy by taking position further to the left. He was ordered to proceed to the threatened point with all possible despatch, and hold the enemy in check until the eighth infantry could come up to his support. The battery dashed

back to the left flank in full view of the enemy, and engaged him within point-blank range of his small guns. So sudden and unexpected was this movement to the enemy, who a moment before saw this battery disappear in the opposite direction behind the smoke of the burning prairie, that his whole column of cavalry pulled up to a halt before a shot had been fired or the guns unlimbered.

A strong body of the enemy's infantry, supported by two squadrons of cavalry, now debouched from the extreme right point of the chaparral, and moved steadily forward to the attack; one section of the battery opened upon them with round shot, shells, and spherical case, so well directed that the whole advance, horse and foot, fell back in disorder to the bushes; the other section in the mean time played into the masses of cavalry that had halted at the right of the guns before mentioned. Although these shot were well directed, and each made an opening through an entire squadron, this part of the enemy's line stood unshaken.

The column of cavalry and infantry driven back in the chaparral by the other section, reformed there, and moved forward a second time to the attack with great regularity. After they advanced about one hundred yards from the chaparral, the



section before ordered to drive them back again, opened, and drove them with even greater success than before. They fell back pell-mell to the bushes and commenced their retreat; their supporting cavalry abandoned them, rushed back upon the head of the columns that had before withstood our shot, and a flight commenced; squadron after squadron took it up, and the entire right wing of the enemy was in full retreat. Both sections were now brought to bear upon the enemy's broken and flying columns, and a brisk and destructive fire kept up till they disappeared in the chaparral, or darkness put an end to the battle.

This battery, under the skilful management of Captain Duncan, and with the aid of the 8th infantry, commanded by Captain Montgomery, and Captain Ker's squadron of dragoons, was of immense service, at this peculiar crisis, on our left line, and to the successful result of the battle. They at first gallantly held the enemy at bay, and finally drove him from the field with great loss. This terminated the action, and our army bivouacked on the ground it occupied, while that of the Mexicans retired into the chaparral, in rear of their position.

We cannot better close this chapter than with the brief and modest despatch of General Taylor :

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION, }  
*Camp at Palo Alto, Texas, May 9, 1846.* }

SIR: I have the honour to report that I was met near this place yesterday, on my march from Point Isabel, by the Mexican forces, and after an action of about five hours, dislodged them from their position and encamped upon the field. Our artillery, consisting of two eighteen-pounders, and two light batteries, was the arm chiefly engaged, and to the excellent manner in which it was manœuvred and served, is our success mainly due.

The strength of the enemy is believed to have been about 6000 men, with seven pieces of artillery, and 800 cavalry. His loss is probably at least one hundred killed. Our strength did not exceed, all told, twenty-three hundred, while our loss was comparatively trifling—four men killed, three officers and thirty-seven men wounded, several of the latter mortally. I regret to say that Major Ringgold, 2d artillery, and Captain Page, 4th infantry, are severely wounded. Lieutenant Luther, 2d artillery, slightly so.

The enemy has fallen back, and it is believed has repossessed the river. I have advanced parties now thrown forward in his direction, and shall move the main body immediately.

In the haste of this report, I can only say that the officers and men behaved in the most admirable manner throughout the action. I shall have the pleasure of making a more detailed report when those of the different commanders shall be received.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

*Brevet Brigadier-General U. S. A., Commanding.*

## CHAPTER IX.

Battle of Resaca de la Palma—Discovery of the Enemy's Position—Lieutenant Ridgely's Battery—Charge of Captain May—Capture of General La Vega—Charge of the Eighth Infantry—Desperate Courage of the Mexicans—Movements of various Regiments—Camp of the Enemy—Total Defeat of the Mexicans—Meeting with the American Troops in the Fort—General Taylor's Despatch.



ON the night of the eighth the American army, after their hard day's work, bivouacked upon the field which had been so fiercely contested. The Mexicans had shown a steadiness in battle, and a skill in managing artillery, much greater than had been anticipated; and the advantage which had been won had been at a sad loss to the Americans in Ringgold and Page, and the number of gallant men killed and wounded, although the enemy suffered much more. The night must have been one of great anxiety to the men, and particularly to the officers. The presence of the Mexicans in such force as they showed excited great fears for the safety of the little garrison opposite Matamoras; and the knowledge that the

enemy could easily be reinforced from Matamoras, while the Americans were cut off from all communication with their friends and all hope of succour, made their case one in which their only hope was in desperate valour. A council of war was held, and different opinions were expressed. Some advocated falling back to Point Isabel, and others intrenching where they were, while a third party, including General Taylor, were in favour of advancing. He, remembering the forlorn condition of the camp, resolved to push forward at all hazards. As he had determined before leaving Point Isabel, if he met the enemy, in whatever force, he would fight him; he now trusted to finish at any cost the march which he had commenced. He decided, however, upon throwing up a temporary breast-work, and leaving the train of baggage and stores, mounting some of the twelve-pounders for its defence, until the road should be clear to the camp.

On the morning of the 9th, the enemy were perceived to be in motion, and the impression was that they were preparing to barricade and occupy the road in force, to dispute the further progress of the Americans. Before the army was in motion this morning, a melancholy event occurred. Lieutenant J. E. Blake, of the topographical corps, who had

distinguished himself by deeds of cool and remarkable intrepidity the day before, lost the life which battle had spared, by a singular accident. As he threw down his holsters, one of his pistols exploded, causing a wound of which, in a few hours, he died, expressing his regret that he had not lost his life on the battle-field.

The army was now in order of battle, and commenced its march forward, weakened not only by its losses, but by the escort under which the wounded had been sent back to Point Isabel, and by the men necessary to defend the baggage. The Americans had now an opportunity to notice the terrible consequences of their previous day's work. The enemy's dead in some places laid in ghostly heaps; and those who were the day before cheering and shouting in the wild enthusiasm of the deadly strife, now shuddered, and turned sick at heart while surveying its effects. Nor were the dead alone there to remind the soldier of the terrible execution of his vocation,—the wounded appealed for aid and assistance; and the American officers ordered out parties to seek for the wounded and attend to their wants; while the soldiers, unprompted, during the morning paid such kind offices to the sufferers as their means admitted. A faithful dog was found

watching the dead body of his master; and no temptation could withdraw his attention from the sacred trust. All who saw this incident were deeply touched. What a mystery is man! The same soldiers whose feelings were thus enlisted in these incidents were, in a few hours more, to be engaged in a more deadly strife than that of the preceding day. But the instinct of self-preservation, had there been no other motive to action, would have left them no choice.

The enemy were met at last, within three miles of the fortified American camp, posted in and near a ravine called Resaca de la Palma. The position was a well-chosen one, and conferred such advantage upon the enemy that nothing but the desperate valour of the American troops, and, in particular, the bold conduct of the dragoons, could have saved the Americans from a ruinous defeat, within hearing of their comrades in the camp. The advance, under Captain G. A. McCall, drew the first fire. Lieutenant Randolph Ridgely was ordered to the front with the light artillery battery, once commanded by Major Ringgold, and Captain Walker with the Texan Rangers was sent to point out the position of the enemy. Lieutenant Ridgely moved on in the very teeth of the Mexican battery, and for

some time shots were briskly exchanged when the contending parties were only about one hundred yards apart. Whenever the fire of the enemy slackened, Lieutenant Ridgely advanced. But the batteries of the enemy were doing murderous execution; and while they kept their position in the road, the day remained in their hands. Beside answering the battery in his front, Lieutenant Ridgely had sufficient to do to repel the infantry and cavalry charges which were made upon him.

While this gallant work was going on in the centre, there was heavy fighting on the left and on the right of the road. From the beginning the American troops steadily advanced, and were gaining everywhere except in the centre; but there, notwithstanding the almost superhuman efforts of Lieutenant Ridgely and the infantry who supported him, the Mexican fire was kept up with a tenacity which prevented any sensible impression upon the enemy's position. Their artillery was served with a coolness and precision which did the highest honour to the Mexican troops. As it was perceived that the weight of the battle was here in the centre, and that until the enemy were there dislodged, all other efforts, however brave and brilliant, were but a useless expenditure of the lives of brave men,







CAPTURE OF GENERAL LA VEGA, BY CAPTAIN MAY.

Colonel May, with his dragoons, was ordered to charge this battery. It is said that General Taylor delivered the order in something like the following words: "Sir, your command has done nothing yet—you must take that battery." "Men," said Captain May, "we must take that battery. Follow!" On went the squadron, their leader several yards in advance, sweeping down the ravine. As they passed Lieutenant Ridgely, a word was exchanged, and he fired a volley to draw the attention of the enemy. The squadron dashed onward, receiving a discharge from the enemy's batteries which killed or disabled full one-third of the squadron.

A wild hurrah went up as the gallant horsemen cleared the breastwork, and charged entirely through the enemy's battery of seven pieces. When Captain May gained the rising ground in the rear, he could rally but six of his men; but with these he charged the Mexican gunners, who, swept for a moment by his furious riding over breastwork, guns, and men, had now regained their pieces. The Mexicans were again driven off, and General La Vega, who was found gallantly fighting in person at his battery, surrendered himself a prisoner to Captain May. The dragoons returned through the

Mexican lines. Lieutenant Ridgely had now pushed up to the edge of the ravine with his battery ; but though he found no cannoneers to encounter, the enemy's infantry poured in upon him a galling fire ; and the cavalry made a dash upon him, coming so near that the Lieutenant struck at the foremost with his sabre. A discharge of canister and shell from one of the pieces thrown among them scattered the troop.

Now was the fiercest struggle—the turning point on which hung the fortunes of the day. The enemy had been driven from their battery, but with the courage and confidence of veterans were rallying. The eighth infantry, Captain Montgomery, now came up, and for a short time was hotly engaged, but succeeded in securing the battery. The regiment charged upon the ravine, in the face of a sheet of fire from the enemy, and dislodged the column of infantry posted to support the enemy's battery. The Mexicans fiercely maintained their ground, and were driven only after the most terrible slaughter. At last they gave way. The battle became a perfect rout. Duncan's artillery came into the front and under his deadly fire the enemy fell back faster and faster. The side batteries now silenced, the American troops pushed by the eager-

ness of pursuit in the narrow defile which was until May's charge impassable, rushed forward with loud and exulting shouts of victory; and the enemy consulted no more any order, except safety in flight.

It is impossible in our brief space to detail all the movements of the several regiments; but a general notice may be attempted. During the charge upon the centre battery, the 8th infantry was joined by a part of the 5th under the gallant Captain Martin Scott, who had just been engaged in a hot personal contest with the enemy, from which he was timely relieved by a part of the 8th infantry under Lieutenant Wood; Lieutenants Ruggles and Crittenden with a small command of the 5th, with the 8th infantry, all under Captain Montgomery, routed the enemy's right wing, carrying his right battery, between which and his centre batteries had been posted the celebrated Tampico Regiment, all of which, except some seventeen men, fell in their position, making the most gallant and determined resistance. A part of the 5th infantry—Captains Wood's and Merrill's companies—under Colonel McIntosh, charged across the enemy's position, carrying one of his centre batteries, and with the 3d and 4th infantry put to rout his left wing, in which gallant charge Colonel McIntosh fell danger-

ously wounded. Captain Marcy of the 5th infantry, with a small command of that regiment, had turned the enemy's left flank, and taken a piece which, leaving in the rear, was removed by the enemy, but retaken by Captain Buchanan of the 4th infantry.

The light companies of the 1st brigade, and the 3d and 4th regiments of infantry, had been deployed on the right of the road, when at various points they became briskly engaged with the enemy. The 4th infantry, under command of Brevet-Major Allen, advancing, discovered that the enemy were pouring a heavy fire of grape and musketry from a small breastwork just in front, defended by one piece of artillery and about one hundred and fifty infantry. Captain Buchanan was ordered to cross to the right and advance. He had in his command some thirty men of the regiment, together with Lieutenants Hays and Woods. He deployed his men upon the crest of the hill, charged, took the piece, and bore it back to a place of safety. The enemy had a breastwork in Captain Buchanan's rear, and opened a heavy fire on him; when, with about ten men, he dislodged him and drove him across the road. Lieutenants Hays and Woods first reached the piece of ordnance and captured it, and were at-

tacked in the act of bearing it away by a party of the enemy determined to regain it, which they repulsed.

The 3d infantry, commanded by Captain Morris, was also deployed in the commencement of the engagement as skirmishers on the right of the road, the left resting on the road. The regiment advanced rapidly to the front, where it became exposed to a cross fire of both armies, but upon changing position joined in the action with service to the successful result. Captain Barbour, with his command, also repulsed a party attempting to retake the piece spoken of.

The 4th regiment, after taking the battery, pushed forward until it emerged from the thicket into the main camp of the enemy, containing the head-quarters of the commanding general of the Mexican army, their ammunition, some three or four hundred mules, saddles, and every variety of camp equipage, with the commander's official correspondence, which they captured. Lieutenant Cochrane fell at the edge of the camp, whilst gallantly leading his men into it.

The camp of the enemy was about two hundred yards in the rear of the battery which had made so determined a resistance. The camp-fires were

lighted, and meat roasting ; everything indeed indicated that the Mexicans thought of anything else than being disturbed in their encampment that night. On went the Americans like the rush of a mighty river. The enemy now and then made a stand, but it was only for an instant. The American artillery which had been posted to defend the baggage, was now brought forward, and the retreating army were driven to the river, where many were drowned in their efforts to cross to Matamoras. As the victorious troops passed the lines of the camp opposite Matamoras, three shots from eighteen-pounders went over them, nearly killing some of the men in the very flush of conquest. The horrible idea for an instant appalled them, that their friends had mistaken them for enemies, and were opening a fire upon them. But the discharge was not repeated, and it was afterward ascertained that the shot came from Matamoras. On again went pursuers and pursued ; the former cheered with the furious excitement of a victory unanticipated in its overwhelming completeness ; the latter goaded with the desperate panic of a defeat as perfect and disastrous as it was unexpected.

Thus ended the brilliant affair of Resaca de la Palma — an engagement which, for the bravery manifested on both sides, up to the instant of the



defeat of one, has not its parallel in the annals of modern warfare. In speaking of the meeting of the little garrison in the fortified camp, and their triumphant friends, a writer from the army says: "*You can imagine how we were received!*" Words cannot describe the joy of such a meeting; but it was damped with sorrow for the gallant spirits who, in the week of separation, had lost their lives in their country's service.

We subjoin the despatch of General Taylor, as furnishing a brief review of the engagement, and a summary of its losses and its advantages.

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION,  
*Camp at Resaca de la Palma, 3 miles from*  
*Matamoras, 10 o'clock, P. M., May 9, 1846.* }

SIR: I have the honour to report that I marched with the main body of the army at two o'clock to-day, having previously thrown forward a body of light infantry into the forest which covers the Matamoras road. When near the spot where I am now encamped, my advance discovered that a ravine crossing the road had been occupied by the enemy with artillery. I immediately ordered a battery of field artillery to sweep the position, flanking and sustaining it by the 3d, 4th, and 5th regiments, deployed as skirmishers to the right and left. A heavy fire of artillery and of musketry was kept

up for some time, until finally the enemy's batteries were carried in succession by a squadron of dragoons and the regiments of infantry that were on the ground. He was soon driven from his position, and pursued by a squadron of dragoons, battalion of artillery, 3d infantry, and a light battery, to the river. Our victory has been complete. Eight pieces of artillery, with a great quantity of ammunition, three standards, and some one hundred prisoners have been taken; among the latter, General La Vega, and several other officers. One general is understood to have been killed. The enemy has recrossed the river, and I am sure will not again molest us on this bank.

The loss of the enemy in killed has been most severe. Our own has been very heavy, and I deeply regret to report that Lieutenant Inge, 2d dragoons, Lieutenant Cochrane, 4th infantry, and Lieutenant Chadbourne, 8th infantry, were killed on the field. Lieutenant Colonel Payne, 4th artillery, Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh, Lieutenant Dobbins, 3d infantry; Captain Hooe and Lieutenant Fowler, 5th infantry; and Captain Montgomery, Lieutenants Gates, Selden, McClay, Burbank, and Jordan, 8th infantry, were wounded. The extent of our loss in killed and wounded is not yet ascertained, and is reserved for a more detailed report.

The affair of to-day may be regarded as a proper supplement to the cannonade of yesterday ; and the two, taken together, exhibit the coolness and gallantry of our officers and men in the most favourable light. All have done their duty, and done it nobly. It will be my pride, in a more circumstantial report of both actions, to dwell upon particular instances of individual distinction.

It affords me peculiar pleasure to report that the field-work opposite Matamoras has sustained itself handsomely during a cannonade and bombardment of 160 hours. But the pleasure is alloyed with profound regret at the loss of its heroic and indomitable commander, Major Brown, who died to-day from the effect of a shell. His loss would be a severe one to the service at any time, but to the army under my orders, it is indeed irreparable. One officer and one non-commissioned officer killed, and ten men wounded, comprise all the casualties incident to this severe bombardment.

I inadvertently omitted to mention the capture of a large number of pack-mules left in the Mexican camp.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

*Brevet Brigadier-General U. S. A., Commanding.*

## CHAPTER X.

Bombardment of Fort Brown.—General Taylor's orders.—Death of Sergeant Weigart.—Mexican guns dismounted.—Reserve of fire.—Precautions against shells and Bombs.—Death of Major Brown.—Message from Arista.—Answer of Captain Hawkins.—Continued Bombardment.—The guns of Palo Alto heard in the Fort.—Resaca de la Palma.—Joyful view of the fugitive Mexicans.—Pleasing Incidents relating to General La Vega.



ORT BROWN, as the post opposite Matamoras was now called, in honour of the commander who fell in its defence, had been an uneasy place of shelter since General Taylor left, and more than one officer who had been in the active service of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, declared that he would rather have fought fifty battles than have been shut up in that fort during its bombardment. The orders of General Taylor were to maintain the post at any hazard, but not to risk anything by a sally ; and in case the position should be surrounded to fire signal guns which would notify the General of the fact. The reader remembers that through the gallantry

of Captain Walker, intelligence that all was safe at Fort Brown was received by General Taylor on the 6th.

The garrison left in the fort was composed of the seventh infantry, Captain Hawkins, and two artillery companies, Lieutenant Bragg. On the 3d of May, the Mexicans having learned that General Taylor had marched for Point Isabel, with the principal part of his force, opened a cannonade and bombardment. Commencing at daylight, the fire was kept up until noon. In the first fire from the Mexicans, Sergeant Weigart of Captain Lee's company was killed. He was carried into the hospital and laid upon a bed. Hardly had he been placed there when a shell coming through the canvass of the tent, burst near the place where the body had been deposited, and in its explosion detached the head of the corpse from the body, without injuring any of the living occupants of the tent. While very little damage was done to the garrison, the whole week was one of continual harassing excitement and hard labour. An officer in the Fort, from whose narrative written to a friend we collect many incidents, states that while in his tent on the morning of the commencement of the attack, a ball struck his bed, ranged its whole length, passed

through two other tents, and buried itself in the parapet. It was fortunate for this gentleman that he had been that day at least an early riser.

In the beginning of the American fire two of the Mexican guns, twelve-pounders, were dismounted, and several of the men who were serving them were killed. The fort in which they were posted was soon after abandoned, but a constant fire was kept up from other points. The cannonade and bombardment, with a short cessation at noon, continued briskly until dark, and was even occasionally heard until midnight. But although twelve or fifteen hundred shot were thrown, very little effect was produced, and no life was lost, except that of the sergeant already mentioned.

To return the fire of the Mexicans would have been a dangerous waste of ammunition; for the garrison well understood that the Mexicans desired nothing more than to provoke the Americans to an expenditure of their munitions of war. The fort was in hourly expectation, day and night, of being attacked by storm, and the fire was therefore reserved for that last extremity. Meanwhile all possible precautions were taken to shelter the soldiers against bombs and shells. It was said by one of the letter-writers that when General Taylor

entered Fort Brown, he found that its garrison had been literally buried in the earth. Bomb-proof shelters were constructed, by laying barrels of pork together, placing wood across, and heaping sand over the whole. Holes were dug also in the ground, into which the men could plunge upon occasion. When a shell was coming, the men would throw themselves upon the ground; and at a sign of smoke fall from the parapet, and dive into the shelters provided. The Mexicans had little suspicion that all their waste of ammunition produced such indifferent results; but, as has been since ascertained, supposed they had killed all, or nearly all the garrison.

On the morning of the 6th of May, as Major Brown was standing near Captain Mausfield, directing the operation of the corps of engineers, his leg was wounded by the explosion of a shell. Amputation was necessary; but in the burrow in which the wounded officer was placed, to defend his body from further injury from the explosives which were constantly bursting in the fort, little hope could be entertained of his recovery. He died on Saturday, the seventh day of the bombardment, before the cry of victory reached the fort. Major Brown was a veteran, having entered the army as a common sol-

dier, in the year 1812, at the age of twenty-five. He was in nearly all the battles on the Niagara in 1813 and 1814, and before the close of that war was raised to a lieutenancy. He served through the whole of the Florida war, and reached the rank of Major by regular gradations. As an officer his merit is briefly but strongly expressed in General Taylor's despatch. He was indeed a most efficient officer, uniting to indomitable courage the great advantages of exact military knowledge, the result of long experience.

After the wound of Major Brown, the command of the fort devolved upon Captain Hawkins, of the 7th infantry. Large parties of mounted Mexican infantry were now seen in the rear of the fort, and the impression was that, having cannonaded the fort so long, the enemy were now about to attempt it by assault. These parties were scattered with canister, but a shower of shells followed for an hour or two. A parley was then sounded by the assailants, and a white flag displayed. Two Mexican officers advanced, and were received by two Americans, who bore to Captain Hawkins a communication from General Arista. The Mexican commander assured the Americans that General Taylor could not reach them to give them succour; and that



in one hour's time, if they did not surrender, they would be put to the sword. He begged them, therefore, for humanity's sake, to surrender. After a brief consultation, at which the officers were unanimous in their determination to defend the place to the death, the following answer was returned to the summons of Arista :

HEAD-QUARTERS, UNITED STATES FORCES, }  
*Near Matamoras, May 6, 1846, 3 o'clock, P. M.* }

SIR :—Your humane communication has just been received, and after the consideration due to its importance, I must respectfully decline to surrender my forces to you.

The exact purport of your despatch I cannot feel confident that I understand, as my interpreter is not skilled in your language ; but if I have understood you correctly, you have my reply above.

I am, sir, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

E. S. HAWKINS,

*Commanding U. S. forces opposite Matamoras.*

GENERAL M. ARISTA,  
Commanding Division of the North.

When this reply was received, the Mexicans opened their batteries with a shower of shot and shell which lasted until sunset ; and in the midst

of the fire the garrison displayed their regimental colours upon different parts of the walls, in token of their absolute determination to maintain the defence to the last. The night passed quietly, but in a state of vigilance, and at daylight the next morning the bombardment was resumed. It was kept up during the whole of the 7th, with little intermission, until sunset. After dark, Captain Mansfield, of the engineer corps, went out with one hundred men and levelled a traverse which had been thrown up by General Worth, on the bank of the river, lest the enemy should make use of it to fire into the fort. This duty was accomplished in safety before midnight.

At that hour a random fire of musketry commenced in all directions upon the fort, but was not returned; and at daylight the enemy's batteries again opened. During the day this work was kept up with great activity, and for a portion of the time fire was directed upon the fort from the north, south, and west at the same instant. In a pause of the Mexican batteries, the Americans heard the guns of Palo Alto. Now they knew that General Taylor was approaching—they could distinctly hear the volleys of musketry. Hitherto they had done little more in the fort than to fire often enough

to indicate that they were still alive; now for an hour or two they engaged in a brisk cannonade with their assailants.

Night closed in, and the firing ceased. The garrison were permitted to pass the first night of anything like sleep for a week. They could not tell, it is true, what had been the result of the day's work; but the facts that they were unmolested, that there were no ringings of bells or other demonstrations of triumph in Matamoras, and that the noise of the firing at Palo Alto had advanced as it closed, and become more distinct, all augured well; though from the known disparity of the forces engaged, the garrison could not but have its misgivings.

At daylight on the ninth, the enemy's batteries opened again on the fort. This day Major Brown died. Soon after his death the thoughts of the garrison were diverted from that event by hearing the guns at Resaca de la Palma. The discharges drew nearer and nearer, until between four and five the garrison saw the flying Mexican cavalry making for the ferry to cross to Matamoras. One of the officers of the garrison sprang upon the wall at the foot of the staff on which the regimental flag was hoisted, and, beckoning for silence, directed three cheers for the stars and stripes; and three such

cheers were given as men in their position of deliverance and triumph only could send up. Every gun from the enemy now ceased its fire; and in a little time the retreat was beaten, and the siege was raised. After all the expenditure of ammunition which seven days' bombarding and cannonade involved, it is wonderful that only twelve or thirteen men were wounded, and two killed.

Now was the time to compare notes and relate adventures. Notwithstanding the fatigue and exhaustion of all parties, we can readily imagine that officers and men were busily engaged in mutual descriptions. It is certain that though the soldiers on the field had the most excitement, the others had the opportunity for the exercise of quite as much courage, and more endurance. Through the whole week they were engaged in completing and repairing the works which sheltered them; isolated and cut off as they were from all communication with their friends, they could form no conception of what would be the advantage, if any, of all this exertion and suffering; nor can we wonder if an occasional doubt occurred to them, that, after all, they were but protracting their resistance, until ferocious in the triumph of victory over their friends, the Mexican thousands would rush over the little

garrison like an avalanche. But the contest was now over. Their safety was ensured; and their confidence in old Rough and Ready made such a general, with such soldiers, and with officers worthy both of their chief and of their subordinates, invincible, as they have since proved themselves on other well-fought fields.

Our last two chapters have had in them so much of the cruelty and carnage of war, that we cannot resist the temptation to allude also to some of its courtesies. We derive the narrative from the correspondence of the Baltimore Republican. General La Vega, after his capture by Captain May was conducted by order of that officer to Colonel Twiggs. The artillery battalion commanded by Colonel Childs was formed near the chapparal in a square, and Colonel Twiggs sent for its commander to receive the prisoner.

“Colonel Childs when he came up dismounted in courtesy to General La Vega, who was on foot. He then sent an order to his battalion, that the prisoner should be received with the honour due his rank. As soon as the General issued from the chapparal, the words ‘Present Arms’ were given, The square ‘presented arms’ in perfect silence, and, as he approached, not a smile of gratification,

or a word of exultation, was seen or heard; (so much for the delicacy of the common soldier, who had, perhaps, the day before, lost his nearest friend by the enemy's cannon-shot.) General La Vega seemed surprised at the salute, courteously and slowly raised his hat, and the square was brought to a shoulder.

“Colonel Childs then called from his position Captain Magruder, who commanded one of the companies of the square. Captain Magruder had known General La Vega before, and immediately insisted upon his mounting his (Captain M.'s) horse. No sooner was this done, than it became necessary for the battalion to move on, and Captain Magruder was ordered by Colonel Childs to escort the prisoner, *in security*, with a small command, to General Taylor. Fortunately no rescue was attempted, as his command was very small, and the order was promptly executed, when General La Vega was introduced on the field, by Captain Magruder, to General Taylor. General Taylor shook him warmly by the hand, and addressed to him the following handsome remarks:

“General: I do assure you, I deeply regret that this misfortune has fallen upon *you*. I regret it sincerely, and I take great pleasure in returning you

the sword which you have this day worn with so much gallantry,' handing him, at the same time, the sword which General La Vega had yielded to Captain May. General La Vega made a suitable reply in Spanish, and was then taken charge of by Colonel Twiggs, at the Colonel's own request, and entertained by him in the most hospitable manner, in his own tent, until his departure for New Orleans."

In his despatch mentioning the departure of General La Vega and other officers to New Orleans, General Taylor bespeaks for them such provision as may be allowed by law ; and remarks that our own prisoners were treated with great kindness by the Mexican officers—referring of course to Captain Thornton's party, at that time the only prisoners. Courtesies on his personal account were shown by General Taylor to his brave and magnanimous prisoner ; nor did General La Vega while in this country find any reason to doubt North American appreciation of courage and patriotism, though in an officer of the enemy.

## CHAPTER XI.

Burying the Dead—General Taylor and Commodore Conner—Preparations to cross to Matamoras—Armistice refused—Bloodless Capture—Respect to Mexican Personal Rights—General Taylor and the Volunteer—Narrative of one of Captain May's Dragoons.



THE day after the battle of Resaca de la Palma, Sunday, May 10th, was devoted by General Taylor to the burial of the dead,—a melancholy duty, and one whose admonitions must appeal even to the soldier's heart; suggesting the hope that the day will come when the teachings of the Prince of Peace will be so practically acknowledged that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Solemn thoughts must force themselves upon those who are called to cover up from the light the work of their own hands; and there is little doubt that the respect paid to the dead has had a great influence in humanizing modern warfare. So may we hope that one advance upon another will be made, until war itself, successively



redeemed from barbarity after barbarity, will, in a Christian world, be known no more.

General Taylor sent to Matamoras for Mexican surgeons to attend their own wounded, and for men to bury their own dead. These measures doubtless gave many a poor fellow the opportunity to receive the kind attention of friends and relatives; and taught the enemy that dreadful in battle as the Americans had shown themselves, they were not unmindful of the dictates of mercy and humanity. The exchange of Captain Thornton and his command was negotiated on the 11th instant; and the army, on that officer's return, were entertained with his account of the confidence of the Mexicans before the late battles that victory would perch upon their banners. Indeed the engagement would seem to have afforded the Americans, from the Mexican superiority of force, so little chance of escape that defeat would have been no disgrace to our arms; and, therefore, was the victory the more glorious. The army which General Taylor met, particularly after its reinforcement on the 9th, was the best appointed and best disciplined which Mexico had ever sent into the field. To the two thousand "veterans" which came into action at Resaca de la Palma,

defeat was positively a new thing, for in their intestine wars they had always been victorious.

Measures were now to be taken for the pursuance of the triumphs so well begun. Acting under orders from his government, General Taylor prepared to take possession of Matamoras. For this purpose he left Fort Brown to hold a communication with Commodore Conner at Point Isabel; and to bring up his mortars for the bombardment of Matamoras. The interview between the General and the Commodore, wittily described by Mr. Thorpe, in his work entitled "Our Army on the Rio Grande," will amuse the reader.

"The singular simplicity that marks General Taylor's personal appearance and habits, has become a subject of universal fame. It is curious that a soldier, so eminent in all the qualities of discipline, should be so citizen-looking in his own appearance. Commodore Conner, on the contrary, is an officer that is not only strict in his dress, but has an exact nicety about it. He appears in full and splendid uniform on all public occasions, being the exact contrast, in this particular, of General Taylor.

"At the proper time, Commodore Conner sent word to General Taylor, that he would come on shore to pay him a visit of ceremony. This put

old 'Rough and Ready' into a tremendous excitement. If Commodore Conner had quietly come up to his tent, and given him a sailor's grip, and sat down on a camp-chest, and talked over matters in an old-fashioned way, General Taylor would have been prepared; but, to have the most carefully-dressed officer in our navy, commanding the finest fleet, come in full uniform, surrounded by all the glittering pomp of splendid equipments—to pay a visit of ceremony, was more than General Taylor had, without some effort, nerve to go through with; but, ever equal to the emergencies, he determined to compliment Commodore Conner, and through him the navy, *by appearing in full uniform*, a thing his officers, associated with him for years, had never witnessed.

"In the meanwhile, Commodore Conner was cogitating over the most proper way to compliment General Taylor. Having heard of his peculiar disregard of military dress, he concluded he would make the visit in a manner comporting to General Taylor's habits, and consequently equipped himself in plain white drilling, and, unattended, came ashore.

"The moment General Taylor heard that Commodore Conner had landed, he abandoned some

heavy work he was personally attending to about the camp, and precipitately rushed into his tent, delved at the bottom of an old chest, and pulled out a uniform coat, that had peacefully slumbered for years in undisturbed quietude, slipped himself into it, in his haste fastening it so that one side of the standing collar was three button-holes above the other, and sat himself down as uncomfortable as can well be imagined. With quiet step, and unattended, Commodore Conner presented himself at General Taylor's tent. The noble representatives of the army and navy shook hands, both in exceeding astonishment at each other's personal appearance.

"The wags of the army say, that the above contains the only *authentic* account of General Taylor's ever being 'headed,' and that since that time, he has taken to linen roundabouts, of the largest dimensions, with more pertinacity than ever."

Something of course must be allowed, in a narrative like the preceding, for a little pleasant exaggeration. But as the personal appearance and manners of a commander like Taylor are subjects of interest, they are entitled to a place in our narrative; and indeed they constitute no small circumstances in

making up an opinion of character. Visits or receptions of ceremony never, in one service, have interfered with duty; and punctilious as Commodore Conner is stated to be in the extract above given, he has shown, in the landing of the troops near Vera Cruz, that he can be as exact and methodical in his duty as it is possible for a man to be in toilet or ceremony; and the complete success, and absence of accident or disaster which attended the disembarkation of the army of invasion under his direction, is one of the most remarkable events of the war with Mexico.

Leaving nothing undone to complete the possession and occupation of the territory on the east of the Rio Grande, General Taylor organized and despatched a force which took peaceable possession of Barita, a town on the Mexican bank, at which it was said the Mexicans were concentrating their forces for new operations upon the disputed territory. In this bloodless victory a portion of the naval force participated. General Taylor meanwhile returned to Fort Brown to prosecute the operations against Matamoras.

Deficiency of means had delayed any demonstration against the Mexican town. Had General Taylor been provided with a proper ponton train,

he could instantly have followed the victory of Resaca de la Palma by driving the enemy from Matamoras; but being deficient in the proper appliances, he was obliged to wait a week to accumulate small boats, and to bring up and mount mortars with which to play upon the town from the fort. On the evening of the 16th, all was ready; and the dispositions for the order of march were made.

On the morning of the 17th, the Mexican commander made signals for a parley. His messenger was received, and desired the establishment of an armistice, until the governments should determine the question of boundary. To this General Taylor replied that the time for an armistice was passed. The next request was for a suspension of hostilities; and this also General Taylor positively refused. With this answer the Mexican officer retired.

The crossing was the next day effected, above the town, while a diversion was made below, in the direction of Barita, in case any opposition should be offered by the Mexicans. None, however, was attempted. Not even the show of resistance was presented; and it is said that the Mexicans on the opposite banks even assisted the Americans in landing from the boats. The whole manœuvre

passed as quietly and peaceably as if it were a transportation of troops in a friendly country. One officer, a lieutenant, was accidentally drowned in crossing the river; and except this, nothing occurred of a disastrous nature.

While the troops were forming on the Mexican bank, he was met by a deputation of officers, who in the foregone conclusion of a surrender, asked if the government property could be retained by the Mexicans. To this question, both here and when it was repeated at the summons of the citadel to surrender, the same answer, a denial, was returned. The Prefect on behalf of the civil authorities, and the commander of the citadel on behalf of the military, formally surrendered. The Mexican flag was hauled down and the stars and stripes ran up; many of the Matamoras citizens joined in the cheering of the American troops; a sufficient garrison was placed in the fort; and the army, after moving through the town, drew off and encamped in the vicinity, without having fired a gun in taking possession. A party of troops was detached to reconnoitre, and overtook a body of the retreating Mexicans, twenty-two of whom they brought back as prisoners.

On examining the defences, it was discovered

that General Arista had removed in his retreat all the stores which could be taken away; and caused the mortars and such munitions as could not be removed in the haste of departure to be thrown into the wells. It was a complete evacuation. The precise motives which led to so peaceable a yielding of the ground cannot be determined; but a leading one was doubtless the fear of risking another engagement, with the troops under his command so completely dispirited. Perhaps the men could not have been brought up to the point of resistance with any effect, and a doubly disastrous pursuit and slaughter would have occurred. The disposition of the people of Matamoras, too, as evinced in their reception of the American army, and in their subsequent conduct, was anything but favourable to the expectation that they would submit to the enormous sacrifice of personal rights and property which a defence of the place would have involved.

Perhaps some key to the fact that comparatively little public property was found in Matamoras, is contained in the immense booty taken in the field. The Mexicans would appear from the articles left behind them in their several defeats, to be quite oriental in their notions of the proper camp equipage



of their commanders, although the poor privates are far from sumptuously fed or clothed. The spoils of Resaca de la Palma upon removal to Point Isabel, made that post to borrow the language of a letter-writer, quite a Mexican museum. Among the articles found was Ampudia's dinner service of silver. This was however not retained, but sent to the owner; and a like regard to personal property was generally observed by the Americans. Orders were issued to the army, upon occupying Matamoras, not to take any article without paying its actual value; and the citizens of the place were permitted to prosecute their usual employments without let or hindrance; except that the selling of liquors was interdicted, and as far as possible suppressed.

General Taylor remained in Matamoras, waiting for supplies, reinforcements, and the means of transportation until the 5th of August. During this time the only military operations consisted of the taking possession of several small Mexican towns, without the expenditure of life or ammunition; and with the great battles which we have yet before us to describe, we cannot take note of all the incidents of these three months; particularly as they possess comparatively no interest. The Mexicans

became accustomed to their new neighbours; and on the whole derived benefit from them in the market for provisions, at war prices, which the presence of the army created. An American newspaper was established, and other strange innovations were introduced; but everything moved on in as much quiet as could possibly be expected, though the stringent regulations of the General could not prevent all lawless acts; and American strayers who wandered in the way of danger sometimes were beaten or killed by desperadoes. It is due to the army, regular and volunteers, to say that their conduct was with very few exceptions most exemplary.

The commanding officer appears to have kept up as little form and state in Matamoras, while civil and military dictator, as in his camp. A correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger, a volunteer, relates, that while sitting on the steps waiting for the post-office to open, early on the morning of his arrival, an elderly gentleman, of very plain appearance, and in citizen's dress, came up to him and inquired, "to what regiment do you belong?" The volunteer did not know the questioner, and merely replied, "to the Baltimore battalion." He rejoined, "O, I thought you were a regular, and was about

to say that you would miss the morning parade." He then walked away.

In returning to the encampment about an hour after, the writer continues, I had to pass through the Plaza, and there, under an old tarpaulin awning, shaped like the roof of a house, I saw the same old gentleman, who, seeing that I had newspapers in my hand, called me to him. As I was obeying, the "Orderly" stopped me and said, "No one can go to the General's tent." I replied, "I don't care about going, but that old man called me, and I thought I would see what he wanted." The faithful fellow still refused, when the old man rose up, and coming from under the awning, said, "pass him in, orderly; pass him in." The latter did as he was ordered, remarking to me as he permitted me to pass, "that is the general; when you get up to him, take off your cap." I was now before General Taylor. He immediately asked, "who is your commanding officer?" I replied, "Col. Watson." He added, "I suppose those papers are for him?" I answered, "no, general, they are mine." He then asked me the dates, on which I handed them to him, and he remarked, "I should like to read them." I replied, "you can keep them, sir." He then looked over them, and, handing me the weeklies, said, "I will

return the balance to Colonel Watson for you." I now thought it was time for me to retire, and said, "I did not know that you were the general when I saw you at the post-office this morning, or I certainly—" He interrupted me with, "no matter, my son, no matter about that." The most agreeable part of this little adventure to the volunteer was, that in return for his newspapers the general directed the cook to furnish him with his breakfast.

At last, after weary waiting, the army was ready to move. The volunteers had, in the mean time, an opportunity to acquire discipline by drilling, though many of them, declining to serve for a year, instead of six months, were discharged and returned. They had also an opportunity to learn something, among men who knew, of the personal details of war and fighting; and to descend from charging in the mass to individual experience. As a graphic picture of what may be one man's share, we copy the following exciting narrative:

"On the second day, at Resaca de la Palma, our troop stood anxiously waiting for the signal to be given, and never had I looked upon men upon whose countenances were more clearly expressed a fixed determination to win. The lips of some were pale with excitement, and their eyes wore that fixed

expression which betokens mischief; others with shut teeth would quietly laugh and catch a tighter grip of the rein, or seat themselves with care and firmness in the saddle, while quiet words of confidence and encouragement were passed from each to his neighbour. All at once Captain May rode to the front of his troop—every rein and sabre was tightly grasped. Raising himself and pointing at the battery, he shouted, ‘Men, *follow!*’ There was now a clattering of hoofs and a rattling of sabre sheaths—the fire of the enemy’s guns was partly drawn by Lieutenant Ridgely, and the next moment we were sweeping like the wind up the ravine. I was in a squad of about nine men, who were separated by a shower of grape from the battery, and we were in advance, May leading. He turned his horse opposite the breast-work, in front of the guns, and with another shout ‘to follow,’ leaped over them. Several of the horses did follow, but mine, being new and not well trained, refused; two others balked, and their riders started down the ravine to turn the breast-work where the rest of the troop had entered. I made another attempt to clear the guns with my horse, turning him around—feeling all the time secure at thinking the guns discharged—I put his head towards them and gave

him spur, but he again balked ; so, turning his head down the ravine, I too started to ride round the breast-work.

“ As I came down, a lancer dashed at me with lance in rest. With my sabre I parried his thrust, only receiving a slight flesh-wound from its point in the arm, which felt at the time like the prick of a pin. The lancer turned and fled ; at that moment a ball passed through my horse on the left side and shattered my right leg. The shot killed the horse instantly, and he fell upon my left leg, fastening me by his weight to the earth. There I lay, right in the midst of the action, where carnage was riding riot, and every moment the shot, from our own and the Mexican guns, tearing up the earth around me. I tried to raise my horse so as to extricate my leg, but I had already grown so weak with my wound that I was unable, and, from the mere attempt, I fell back exhausted. To add to my horror, a horse which was careering about, riderless, within a few yards of me, received a wound, and he commenced struggling and rearing with pain. Two or three times he came near falling on me, but at length, with a scream of agony and a bound, he fell dead—his body touching my own fallen steed. What I had been in momentary dread of, now occurred—

my wounded limb, which was lying across the horse, received another ball in the ankle.

“I now felt disposed to give up; and, exhausted through pain and excitement, a film gathered over my eyes, which I thought was the precursor of dissolution. From this hopeless state I was aroused by a wounded Mexican, calling out to me, ‘*Bueno Americana*,’ and turning my eyes towards the spot, I saw that he was holding a certificate and calling to me. The tide of action now rolled away from me, and hope again sprang up. The Mexican uniforms began to disappear from the chapparal, and squadrons of our troops passed in sight, apparently in pursuit. While I was thus nursing the prospect of escape, I beheld, not far from me, a villanous-looking *ranchero*, armed with an American serjeant’s short sword, despatching a wounded American soldier, whose body he robbed; the next he came to was a Mexican, whom he served the same way, and thus I looked on while he murderously slew four. I drew an undischarged pistol from my holsters, and, laying myself along my horse’s neck, watched him, expecting to be the next victim; but something frightened him from his vulture-like business, and he fled in another direction. I need not say that had he visited me I should have taken one

more shot at the enemy, and would have died content had I succeeded in making such an assassin bite the dust. Two hours after, I had the pleasure of shaking some of my comrades by the hand, who were picking up the wounded. They lifted my Mexican friend, too, and I am pleased to say he, as well as myself, lives to fight over again the sanguinary fray of Resaca de la Palma."



## CHAPTER XII.

Taylor a Major General.—President's Letter.—Resolutions of Congress, and of Legislatures.—Plan of the movement against Monterey —March to that City.—General Taylor's Report of the Operations against New Leon.



THE appreciation of the people and government of the United States of the high character of the military exploits of the 8th and 9th of May, was made known to the army in a letter from the President accompanying a commission of Major General by brevet, conferred upon General Taylor. In the letter, after referring to the commission conferred upon the General for his gallant conduct and distinguished services, the President says:

“It gave me sincere pleasure, immediately upon the receipt of official intelligence from the scene of your achievements, to confer upon you, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, this testimonial of the estimate which your government places upon your skill and gallantry. To yourself

and the brave officers and soldiers under your command the gratitude of the country is justly due. Our army have fully sustained their deservedly high reputation, and added another bright page to the history of American valour and patriotism. They have won new laurels for themselves and for their country. My confidence in them never faltered. The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma rank among our most brilliant victories, and will long be remembered by the American people. When all the details of these battles and of the noble defence of the camp opposite to Matamoras shall have been received, it will be my pleasure, as it will be my grateful duty, to render to the officers and men under your command suitable testimonials for their conduct in the brilliant victories which a superintending Providence has enabled them to achieve for their country.

“In transmitting to you this commission, and in communicating to the officers and soldiers under your command my profound sense of their meritorious services, I but respond to the patriotic enthusiasm manifested by the people in behalf of their brave defenders. Whilst my warmest thanks are tendered to the survivors, the nation mourns the loss of the brave officers and soldiers who fell in

defence of their country upon the field of victory. Their names also shall be remembered, and appropriate honours be paid to their memory by a grateful country.

“ You will cause this communication to be made known to the army under your command.”

Congress passed resolutions, also, of high approval; and the legislature of Louisiana presented him with a sword; while other states united in their testimony of praise, or rather responded to the enthusiastic commendations which were everywhere uttered by the press and people, in many places in meetings called for the purpose. In remembering the services of the general, the army and its officers, regulars and volunteers, have not been passed over; and so far as the praise of a nation is a reward, Taylor and his officers, and the other commands in Mexico, have been well remembered. General Taylor was, in July, appointed a Major General under the act of Congress for increasing the regular army.

The plan of procedure adopted by General Taylor in his further movements, was to make Camargo, on the Rio Grande, the base of his operations instead of Matamoras, as the road between Camargo and Monterey, the next place menaced, was shorter

and more practicable than the direct route from Matamoras. But he was delayed, first by the non-arrival of the reinforcements on which he counted; and, next, by the lack of means of transportation. These circumstances giving the Mexicans rest and chance for recovery from their panic, changed what might, perhaps, have been a triumphal march, into a fierce and bloody contest. The arrival of Santa Anna, whose conduct, if not perfidious, has been inexplicable, added, no doubt, resolution to the resistance which the Mexicans made against the invading army.

On the 5th of August, General Taylor moved from Matamoras toward Camargo; and late in the same month sent General Worth forward to Seralvo to wait the approach of the main body. On the 7th of September, General Taylor left Camargo for Seralvo, and from thence pushed on at once for Monterey. The proceedings which resulted in the capture of that city we give in General Taylor's own language.

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION, }  
*Camp near Monterey, October 9, 1846.* }

SIR: I have now the honour to submit a detailed report of the recent operations before Monterey, resulting in the capitulation of that city.

The information received on the route from Ceralvo, and particularly the continual appearance in our front of the Mexican cavalry, which had a slight skirmish with our advance at the village of Ramas, induced the belief as we approached Monterey, that the enemy would defend that place. Upon reaching the neighbourhood of the city on the morning of the 19th of September, this belief was fully confirmed. It was ascertained that he occupied the town in force; that a large work had been constructed commanding all the northern approaches; and that the Bishop's Palace and some heights in its vicinity near the Saltillo road, had also been fortified and occupied with troops and artillery. It was known from information previously received, that the eastern approaches were commanded by several small works in the lower edge of the city.

The configuration of the heights and gorges in the direction of the Saltillo road, as visible from the point attained by our advance on the morning of the 19th, led me to suspect that it was practicable to turn all the works in that direction, and thus cut the enemy's line of communication. After establishing my camp at the "Walnut Springs," three miles from Monterey, the nearest suitable position,

it was, accordingly, my first care to order a close reconnoissance of the ground in question, which was executed on the evening of the 19th by the engineer officers under the direction of Major Mansfield. A reconnoissance of the eastern approaches was at the same time made by Capt. Williams, topographical engineers. The examination made by Major Mansfield proved the entire practicability of throwing forward a column to the Saltillo road, and thus turning the position of the enemy. Deeming this to be an operation of essential importance, orders were given to Brevet Brigadier General Worth, commanding the second division, to march with his command on the 20th; to turn the hill of the Bishop's Palace; to occupy a position on the Saltillo road; and to carry the enemy's detached works in that quarter, where practicable. The first regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, under command of Colonel Hays, was associated with the second division on this service. Captain Sanders, engineers, and Lieutenant Meade, topographical engineers, were also ordered to report to General Worth for duty with his column.

At 2 o'clock, P. M., on the 20th, the second division took up its march. It was soon discovered, by officers who were reconnoitring the town, and

communicated to General Worth, that its movement had been perceived, and that the enemy was throwing reinforcements toward the Bishop's Palace and the height which commands it. To divert his attention as far as practicable, the first division, under Brigadier General Twiggs, and field division of volunteers, under Major General Butler, were displayed in front of the town until dark. Arrangements were made at the same time to place in battery during the night, at a suitable distance from the enemy's main work, the citadel, two 24 pounder howitzers, and a 10 inch mortar, with a view to open a fire on the following day, when I proposed to make a diversion in favour of General Worth's movement. The 4th infantry covered this battery during the night. General Worth had in the meantime reached and occupied for the night, a defensive position just without range of a battery above the Bishop's Palace, having made a reconnoissance as far as the Saltillo road.

Before proceeding to report the operations of the 21st and following days, I beg leave to state that I shall mention in detail only those which were conducted against the eastern extremity of the city, or elsewhere, under my immediate direction, referring you for the particulars of General Worth's opera-

tions, which were entirely detached, to his own full report transmitted herewith.

Early on the morning of the 21st, I received a note from General Worth, written at half-past 9 o'clock the night before, suggesting what I had already intended, a strong diversion against the centre and left of the town to favour his enterprise against the heights in rear. The infantry and artillery of the first division, and the field division of volunteers, were ordered under arms and took the direction of the city, leaving one company of each regiment as a camp guard. The 2d dragoons, under Lieutenant Colonel May, and Colonel Wood's regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, under the immediate direction of General Henderson, were directed to the right to support General Worth, if necessary, and to make an impression, if practicable, upon the upper quarter of the city. Upon approaching the mortar battery, the 1st and 3d regiments of infantry and battalion of Baltimore and Washington volunteers, with Captain Bragg's field battery—the whole under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Garland—were directed towards the lower part of the town, with orders to make a strong demonstration, and carry one of the enemy's advanced works, if it could be done without too heavy loss. Major



Mansfield, engineers, and Captain Williams, and Lieutenant Pope, topographical engineers, accompanied this column, Major Mansfield being charged with its direction, and the designation of points of attack. In the mean time the mortar, served by Captain Ramsay, of the ordnance, and the howitzer battery under Captain Webster, 1st artillery, had opened their fire upon the citadel, which was deliberately sustained, and answered from the work. General Butler's division had now taken up a position in rear of this battery, when the discharges of artillery, mingled finally with a rapid fire of small-arms, showed that Lieutenant Garland's command had become warmly engaged. I now deemed it necessary to support this attack, and accordingly ordered the 4th infantry and three regiments of General Butler's division to march at once by the left flank in the direction of the advanced work at the lower extremity of the town, leaving one regiment (1st Kentucky) to cover the mortar and howitzer battery. By some mistake, two companies of the 4th infantry did not receive this order, and consequently did not join the advance companies until some time afterwards.

Lieutenant Colonel Garland's command had approached the town in a direction to the right

of the advanced work (No. 1.) at the north-eastern angle of the city, and the engineer officer, covered by skirmishers, had succeeded in entering the suburbs and gaining cover. The remainder of this command now advanced and entered the town under a heavy fire of artillery from the citadel and the works on the left, and of musketry from the houses and small works in front. A movement to the right was attempted with a view to gain the rear of No. 1, and carry that work; but the troops were so much exposed to a fire which they could not effectually return, and had already sustained such severe loss, particularly in officers, that it was deemed best to withdraw them to a more secure position. Captain Backus, 1st infantry, however, and a portion of his own and other companies, had gained the roof of a tannery, which looked directly into the gorge of No. 1, and from which he poured a most destructive fire into that work and upon the strong building in its rear. This fire happily coincided in point of time with the advance of a portion of the volunteer division upon No. 1, and contributed largely to the fall of that strong and important work.

The three regiments of the volunteer division under the immediate command of Major General

Butler, had in the mean time advanced in the direction of No. 1. The leading brigade, under Brigadier General Quitman, continued its advance upon that work, preceded by three companies of the 4th infantry, while General Butler, with the 1st Ohio regiment, entered the town to the right. The companies of the 4th infantry had advanced within short range of the work, when they were received by a fire that almost in one moment struck down one-third of the officers and men, and rendered it necessary to retire and effect a conjunction with the two other companies then advancing. General Quitman's brigade, though suffering most severely, particularly in the Tennessee regiment, continued its advance, and finally carried the work in handsome style, as well as the strong building in its rear. Five pieces of artillery, a considerable supply of ammunition, and thirty prisoners, including three officers, fell into their hands. Major General Butler, with the 1st Ohio regiment, after entering the edge of the town, discovered that nothing was to be accomplished in his front, and at this point, yielding to the suggestions of several officers, I ordered a retrograde movement; but learning almost immediately from one of my staff that the battery No. 1 was in our possession, the order was

countermanded; and I determined to hold the battery and defences already gained. General Butler with the 1st Ohio regiment, then entered the town at a point farther to the left, and marched in the direction of the battery No. 2. While making an examination with a view to ascertain the possibility of carrying this second work by storm, the general was wounded and soon after compelled to quit the field. As the strength of No. 2, and the heavy musketry fire flanking the approach, rendered it impossible to carry it without great loss, the 1st Ohio regiment was withdrawn from the town.

Fragments of the various regiments engaged were now under cover of the captured battery and some buildings in its front, and on the right. The field batteries of Captains Bragg and Ridgely were also partially covered by the battery. An incessant fire was kept up on this position from battery No. 2, and other works on its right, and from the citadel on all our approaches. General Twiggs, though quite unwell, joined me at this point, and was instrumental in causing the artillery captured from the enemy to be placed in battery, and served by Captain Ridgely against No. 2, until the arrival of Captain Webster's howitzer battery, which took its place. In the mean time, I directed such men

as could be collected of the 1st, 3d, and 4th regiments, and Baltimore battalion, to enter the town, penetrating to the right, and carry the 2d battery if possible. This command, under Lieutenant Colonel Garland, advanced beyond the bridge "Purissima," when, finding it impracticable to gain the rear of the 2d battery, a portion of it sustained themselves for some time in that advanced position; but as no permanent impression could be made at that point, and the main object of the general operation had been effected, the command, including a section of Captain Ridgely's battery, which had joined it, was withdrawn to battery No. 1. During the absence of this column, a demonstration of cavalry was reported in the direction of the citadel. Captain Bragg, who was at hand, immediately galloped with his battery to a suitable position, from which a few discharges effectually dispersed the enemy. Captain Miller, 1st infantry, was despatched with a mixed command, to support the battery on this service. The enemy's lancers had previously charged upon the Ohio and a part of the Mississippi regiment, near some fields at a distance from the edge of the town, and had been repulsed with a considerable loss. A demonstration of cavalry on the opposite side of the river was also dis-

persed in the course of the afternoon by Captain Ridgely's battery, and the squadrons returned to the city. At the approach of evening, all the troops that had been engaged were ordered back to camp, except Captain Ridgely's battery, and the regular infantry of the 1st division, who were detailed as a guard for the works during the night, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Garland. One battalion of the 1st Kentucky regiment was ordered to reinforce this command. Intrenching tools were procured, and additional strength was given to the works, and protection to the men, by working parties during the night, under the direction of Lieutenant Scarritt, engineers.

The main object proposed in the morning had been effected. A powerful diversion had been made to favour the operations of the 2d division, one of the enemy's advanced works had been carried, and we now had a strong foot-hold in the town. But this had not been accomplished without a heavy loss, embracing some of our gallant and promising officers. Captain Williams, topographical engineers, Lieutenants Terrett and Dilworth, 1st infantry, Lieutenant Woods, 2d infantry, Captains Morris and Field, Brevet Major Barbour, Lieutenants Irwin and Hazlitt, 3d infantry, Lieutenant Hos-

kins, 4th infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Watson, Baltimore battalion, Captain Allen and Lieutenant Putnam, Tennessee regiment, and Lieutenant Hett, Ohio regiment, were killed, or have since died of wounds received in this engagement; while the number and rank of the officers wounded gives additional proof of the obstinacy of the contest, and the good conduct of our troops. The number of killed and wounded incident to the operations in the lower part of the city on the 21st is 394.

Early in the morning of this day, (21st,) the advance of the 2d division had encountered the enemy in force, and after a brief but sharp conflict, repulsed him with heavy loss. General Worth, then succeeded in gaining a position on the Saltillo road, thus cutting the enemy's line of communication. From this position the two heights south of the Saltillo road were carried in succession, and the gun taken in one of them turned upon the Bishop's Palace. These important successes were fortunately obtained with comparatively small loss; Captain McKavett, 8th infantry, being the only officer killed.

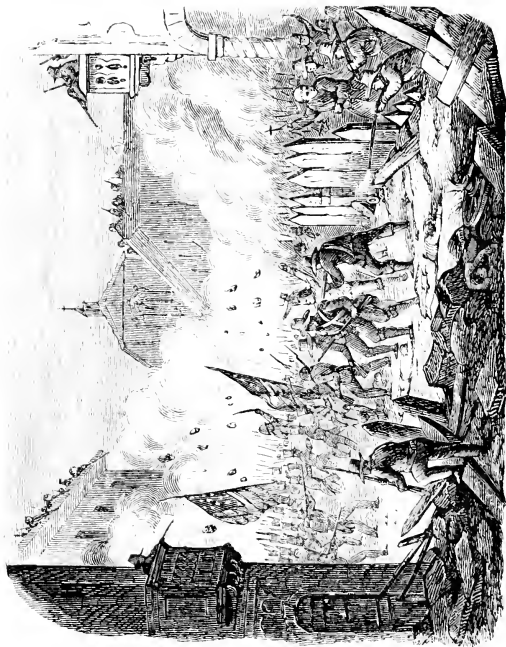
The 22d day of September passed without any active operations in the lower part of the city. The citadel and other works continued to fire at parties exposed to their range, and at the work now occu-

pied by our troops. The guard left in it the preceding night, except Captain Ridgely's company, was relieved at mid-day by General Quitman's brigade: Captain Bragg's battery was thrown under cover in front of the town to repel any demonstration of cavalry in that quarter. At dawn of day, the height above the Bishop's Palace was carried, and soon after meridian, the Palace itself was taken and its guns turned upon the fugitive garrison. The object for which the 2d division was detached had thus been completely accomplished, and I felt confident that with a strong force occupying the road and heights in his rear, and a good position below the city in our possession, the enemy could not possibly maintain the town.

During the night of the 22d, the enemy evacuated nearly all his defences in the lower part of the city. This was reported to me early in the morning of the 23d, by General Quitman, who had already meditated an assault upon those works. I immediately sent instructions to that officer, leaving it to his discretion to enter the city, covering his men by the houses and walls, and advance carefully as far as he might deem prudent. After ordering the remainder of the troops as a reserve, under the orders of Brigadier General Twiggs, I repaired to the







THIRD DAY OF THE SIEGE OF MONTEREY.

abandoned works, and discovered that a portion of General Quitman's brigade had entered the town, and were successfully forcing their way towards the principal plaza. I then ordered up the 2d regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, who entered the city, dismounted, and, under the immediate orders of General Henderson, co-operated with General Quitman's brigade. Captain Bragg's battery was also ordered up, supported by the 3d infantry; and after firing for some time at the cathedral, a portion of it was likewise thrown into the city. Our troops advanced from house to house, and from square to square, until they reached a street but one square in rear of the principal plaza, in and near which the enemy's force was mainly concentrated. This advance was conducted vigorously, but with due caution, and although destructive to the enemy, was attended with but small loss on our part. Captain Ridgely, in the mean time, had served a captured piece in battery No. 1, against the city, until the advance of our men rendered it imprudent to fire in the direction of the cathedral. I was now satisfied that we could operate successfully in the city, and that the enemy had retired from the lower portion of it to make a stand behind his barricades. As General Quitman's brigade had been on duty the

previous night, I determined to withdraw the troops to the evacuated works, and concert with General Worth a combined attack upon the town. The troops accordingly fell back deliberately, in good order, and resumed their original positions, General Quitman's brigade being relieved after nightfall by that of General Hamer. On my return to camp, I met an officer with the intelligence that General Worth, induced by the firing in the lower part of the city, was about making an attack at the upper extremity, which had also been evacuated by the enemy to a considerable distance. I regretted that this information had not reached me before leaving the city, but still deemed it inexpedient to change my orders, and accordingly returned to the camp. A note from General Worth, written at 11 o'clock, P. M., informed me that he had advanced to within a short distance of the principal plaza, and that the mortar (which had been sent to his division in the morning) was doing good execution within effective range of the enemy's position.

Desiring to make no further attempt upon the city without complete concert as to the lines and mode of approach, I instructed that officer to suspend his advance until I could have an interview

with him on the following morning at his headquarters.

Early on the morning of the 24th, I received, through Colonel Moreno, a communication from General Ampudia, proposing to evacuate the town ; which, with the answer, were forwarded with my first despatch. I arranged with Colonel Moreno a cessation of fire until twelve o'clock, at which hour I would receive the answer of the Mexican general at General Worth's head-quarters, to which I soon repaired. In the mean time, General Ampudia had signified to General Worth his desire for a personal interview with me, to which I acceded, and which finally resulted in a capitulation, placing the town and the material of war, with certain exceptions, in our possession. A copy of that capitulation was transmitted with my first despatch.

Upon occupying the city, it was discovered to be of great strength in itself, and to have its approaches carefully and strongly fortified. The town and works were armed with forty-two pieces of cannon, well supplied with ammunition, and manned with a force of at least 7000 troops of the line, and from 2000 to 3000 irregulars. The force under my orders before Monterey, as exhibited by the accompanying return, was 425 officers, and

6220 men. Our artillery consisted of one 10 inch mortar, two 24-pounder howitzers, and four light field batteries of four guns each—the mortar being the only piece suitable to the operations of a siege.

Our loss is twelve officers and one hundred and eight men killed; thirty-one officers and three hundred and thirty-seven men wounded. That of the enemy is not known, but is believed considerably to exceed our own.

I take pleasure in bringing to the notice of the government the good conduct of the troops, both regulars and volunteers, which has been conspicuous throughout the operations. I am proud to bear testimony to their coolness and constancy in battle, and the cheerfulness with which they have submitted to exposure and privation. To the general officers commanding divisions — Major Generals Butler and Henderson, and Brigadier Generals Twiggs and Worth—I must express my obligations for the efficient aid which they have rendered in their respective commands. I was unfortunately deprived, early on the 21st, of the valuable services of Major General Butler, who was disabled by a wound received in the attack on the city. Major General Henderson, commanding the Texan volunteers, has given me important aid in the organi-

zation of the command, and its subsequent operations. Brigadier General Twiggs rendered important services with his division, and as the second in command after Major General Butler was disabled. Brigadier General Worth was intrusted with an important detachment which rendered his operations independent of my own. These operations were conducted with ability, and crowned with complete success.

I desire also to notice Brigadier Generals Hamer and Quitman, commanding brigades in General Butler's division. Lieutenant Colonels Garland and Wilson, commanding brigades in General Twiggs' division. Colonels Mitchell, Campbell, Davis and Wood, commanding the Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, and 2d Texas regiments, respectively, and Majors Lear, Allen, and Abercrombie, commanding the 3d, 4th, and 1st regiments of infantry; all of whom served under my eye, and conducted their commands with coolness and gallantry against the enemy. Colonel Mitchell, Lieutenant Colonel McClung, Mississippi regiment, Major Lear, 3d infantry, and Major Alexander, Tennessee regiment, were all severely wounded, as were Captain Lamotte, 1st infantry, Lieutenant Graham, 4th infantry, Adjutant Armstrong, Ohio

regiment, Lieutenants Scudder and Allen, Tennessee regiment, and Lieutenant Howard, Mississippi regiment, while leading their men against the enemy's position, on the 21st and 23d. After the fall of Colonel Mitchell, the command of the 1st Ohio regiment devolved upon Lieutenant Colonel Weller; that of the 3d infantry, after the fall of Major Lear, devolved in succession upon Captain Bainbridge and Captain Henry, the former being also wounded. The following named officers have been favourably noticed by their commanders: Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, and Adjutant Heiman, Tennessee regiment; Lieutenant Colonel McClung, Captains Cooper and Downing, Lieutenants Patterson, Calhoun, Moore, Russell, and Cook, Mississippi regiment; also Sergeant Major Hearlan, Mississippi regiment, and Major Price, and Captain J. Smith, unattached but serving with it. I beg leave also to call attention to the good conduct of Captain Johnston, Ohio regiment, and Lieutenant Hooker, 1st artillery, serving on the staff of General Hamer, and of Lieutenant Nichols, 2d artillery, on that of General Quitman. Captains Bragg and Ridgely served with their batteries during the operations under my own observation, and in part under my immediate orders, and exhibited distinguished skill and gal-



lantry. Captain Webster, 1st artillery, assisted by Lieutenants Donaldson and Bowen, rendered good service with the howitzer battery, which was much exposed to the enemy's fire on the 21st.

From the nature of the operations, the 2d dragoons were not brought into action, but were usefully employed under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel May, as escorts, and in keeping open our communications. The 1st Kentucky regiment was also prevented from participating in the action of the 21st, but rendered highly important services under Colonel Ormsby, in covering the mortar battery, and holding in check the enemy's cavalry during the day.

I have noticed above the officers whose conduct either fell under my immediate eye, or is noticed only in minor reports which are not forwarded. For further mention of individuals, I beg leave to refer to the reports of division commanders, herewith respectfully transmitted. I fully concur in their recommendations, and desire that they be considered as a part of my own report.

From the officers of my personal staff, and of the engineers, topographical engineers, and ordnance associated with me, I have derived valuable and efficient assistance during the operations. Colonel

Whiting, assistant quartermaster general, Colonels Croghan and Belknap, inspectors general, Major Bliss, assistant adjutant general, Captain Sibley, assistant quartermaster, Captain Waggaman, commissary of subsistence, Captain Eaton and Lieutenant Garnett, aids-de-camp, and Majors Kirby and Van Buren, pay department, served near my person, and were ever prompt, in all situations, in the communication of my orders and instructions. I must express my particular obligations to Brevet Major Mansfield and Lieutenant Scarrit, corps of engineers. They both rendered most important services in reconnoitring the enemy's positions, conducting troops in attack, and strengthening the works captured from the enemy. Major Mansfield, though wounded on the 21st, remained on duty during that and the following day, until confined by his wound to camp. Captain Williams, topographical engineers, to my great regret and the loss of the service, was mortally wounded while fearlessly exposing himself in the attack of the 21st. Lieutenant Pope, of the same corps, was active and zealous throughout the operations. Major Munroe, chief of the artillery, Major Craig and Captain Ramsay, of the ordnance, were assiduous in the performance of their proper duties. The former superintended

their mortar service on the 22d, as particularly mentioned in the report of General Worth, to which I also refer for the services of the engineer and topographical officers detached with the second division.

Surgeon Craig, medical director, was actively employed in the important duties of his department, and the medical staff generally were unremitting in their attention to the numerous wounded—their duties with the regular regiments being rendered uncommonly arduous by the small number serving in the field.

\* \* \* \* \*

Z. TAYLOR,

*Major General U. S. A., Commanding.*

The Adjutant General of the Army, }  
Washington, D. C. }

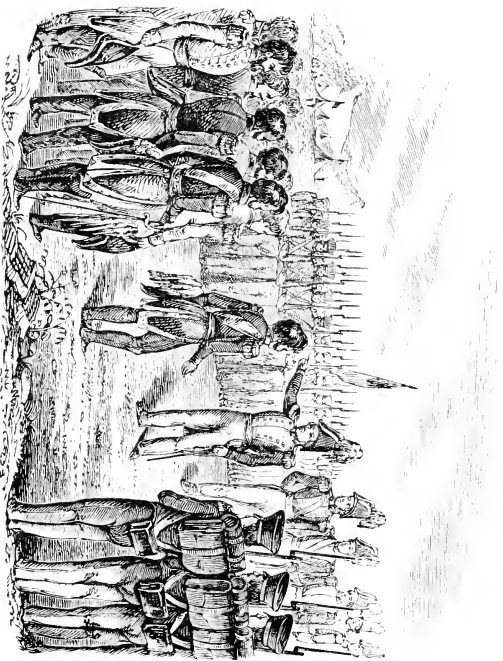
The last paragraph of the despatch, which we have omitted, is a reference to certain maps and documents, forwarded with it.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Terms of the Capitulation.—Remarks upon the Plan of the Advance against Monterey.—General Worth.—Review of his past Services.—Character of his operations at Monterey.—Heroic Deeds of the 21st.—Storming of the Palace Heights on the 22d.—Operations of the 23d.—Interval between the Battles of Monterey and Buena Vista.



THE terms of capitulation by which Monterey surrendered to the American commander were, briefly, as follows: That the officers should be allowed to march out with their side-arms; that the cavalry and infantry should be allowed to march out with their arms and accoutrements; that the artillery should be allowed to march out with one battery of six pieces and twenty-one rounds of ammunition; that all other munitions of war and supplies should be turned over to a board of American officers appointed to receive them; that the Mexican army should be allowed seven days to evacuate the city, and that the American troops should not occupy it until evacuated; that the cathedral fort or citadel should



CHARLES F. SMITH

CAPITULATION OF MONTEREY.



be evacuated at 10 A. M. next day, the 25th. The Mexicans were then to march out, and the American garrison to march in. The Mexicans were allowed to salute their flag when hauled down; that there should be an armistice of eight weeks, during which time neither army should pass a line running from the Rinconada through Linares and San Fernando.

These terms were the subject of some animadversion, when they were received in the United States; but the event has proved their wisdom and excellent policy. They saved on the part of the Mexicans a great part of the exasperation of defeat, and crowned the conquest of arms with the more potent victory of magnanimity. The people were persuaded to the inference and belief, the proclamations of the authorities to the contrary notwithstanding, that the war was against the government, and not against the nation; that it was one waged for the establishment of certain rights and principles claimed by the Americans, and not a war against religion, or an incursion for plunder. But above all are the moderate terms upon which the armistice was arranged to be commended, because they saved humanity the horrors of an assault and the sacking of the city. In such an event as the carrying of a

town by storm, it has ever been the case that the most disgusting horrors of warfare have occurred ; and that the dearest rights and the most sacred duties of human nature, and of Christian obligation, have been outraged. To the high honour of General Taylor and his officers let it be recorded that to the inevitable terrors of war temptations like those of a city carried at the point of the bayonet were not added ; and that our soldiers took possession of Monterey like men with human feelings, instead of rushing in with passions excited by the ardour of resistance, and with their finer feelings blunted and forgotten in the triumph of a furious and costly victory, disputed to the last inch, by the desperate terror of a population maddened by despair.

In the preceding chapter we have given the cool and methodical account of the engagement furnished by General Taylor : upon that modest narrative we shall in this chapter add some of the most remarkable incidents which are given by others, but could not be included in the grave relation of an official paper. Certain omissions are noticed in that report, for the filling up of which General Taylor refers to other documents. For these entire, we cannot find space ; nor would their



necessarily mechanical character of detail interest our readers ; but we have endeavoured to embody all the facts of public importance which they contain, and all the circumstances for which our plan and limits afford scope. A large book might be prepared out of the material furnished by the single affair of Monterey alone.

The general plan of the attack appears to have been arranged as follows : The first division of regulars, General Twiggs, and the volunteer division, General Butler, were to approach the eastern side of the town, where batteries had been erected to defend its approaches, and where, as the streets were entered, it was found that every house, if in a practicable situation, was a citadel. To the second division, under General Worth, was committed the difficult and highly important work of taking possession of the Bishop's Palace, the fort and heights which commanded the town on the west. While the army in Texas was a mere army of occupation ; and few in Texas or in the United States deemed that actual hostilities would occur, a point of military pride induced General Worth to send in the resignation of his commission, after rising from the ranks in 1812 to the brevet rank of Brigadier General. He distinguished himself by

all the qualities which mark the soldier in the war of 1812, and was one of the most efficient and laborious officers in the Florida campaign. Sensitive as brave, he resigned his commission, as we have already stated, in 1846. Whatever may be said of the cause of this act, he deeply regretted it when he found that it had debarred him participation in the engagements of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma; and waiving all punctilio, withdrew his resignation, and hurried to Matamoras to share the dangers and the glories of his victorious countrymen. In the battle of Monterey, his duty, as it was most responsible, was most difficult; and it was so performed, that to General Worth and his gallant command belongs the high honour of an important share in that engagement. And we may here observe, to his high credit as a conscientious man, that though naturally burning to distinguish himself, after the unfortunate step taken in his resignation, he did not expose his command to unnecessary danger for the vain purpose of covering himself with the eclat of a brilliant operation; but united to his courage the prudence of a veteran, and made his advances with as much circumspection and care, as if he had been unstung by any interruption in the routine of his service. General

Worth the *man* — outshone General Worth the *soldier*—for he sacrificed none of his troops to any purpose of personal distinction; and in this respect he towers above many commanders whose names have long been synonymes for all that is desperate in courage and brilliant in victory.

On the 20th, General Worth moved toward the Saltillo road, on the west of the town. It was now discovered that two heights west of the Bishop's palace had been occupied and fortified. Beside these two, the eminence on which the palace stands was occupied above that edifice; adjoining it is a fort; and the building itself was very strongly defended. The day's work of the 21st was to take the two heights first mentioned. In this dashing service, the Texan Rangers and Louisiana volunteers did efficient service with the regular troops. On taking possession of these heights, the guns on that nearest the palace were immediately turned against their former owners.

On the 22d, at day-break, a detachment consisting of artillery, infantry, and Texans, the whole under command of Colonel Childs, was ordered to take possession of the heights above the palace. The movement was made with such secrecy that the assailants were within a hundred yards of the

breastwork before they were perceived; and the three first of the storming-party rushing too fast, found themselves in the hands of the Mexicans. They surrendered, but were killed with their own arms. The labour of this assault, climbing in the face of the enemy, was of itself most desperate. To divert the attention of the castle and palace, a movement was made in another direction, by the 7th infantry, who had bivouacked on one of the heights taken on the day before. They marched down from the hill with cheers, and drew the fire from the palace, while the command of Colonel Childs, supported by reinforcements, was carrying the hill above them. An officer of the army who was with the division engaged in town, says that at the grey of dawn he witnessed from his position the storming of the heights. The first intimation was the discharge of musketry near the top of the hill. "Each flash looked like an electric spark. The flashes and the white smoke ascended the hill-side as steadily as if worked by machinery. The dark space between the apex of the height and the curling smoke of the musketry grew less and less, until the whole became enveloped in smoke, and we knew that our gallant troops had carried it. It was a glorious sight, and quite warmed our cold and

chilled bodies." The reader will imagine how much they needed warmth, when he is reminded that these soldiers had lain all night in the rain upon the ground, all without blankets, and many in their shirt-sleeves. The division under General Worth, whose exploits we have been relating, left the camp with only two days' rations, much of which scanty supply was spoiled by the rain, and climbed and fought for forty-eight hours, many of them without any food except raw corn. A howitzer was carried—fairly *lifted* upon the heights above the palace, and opened upon the edifice, which was filled with troops. The Mexicans charged upon it, but were repulsed. It opened a plunging fire upon the palace; while the fire of musketry was also hotly kept up.

About noon the Mexican cavalry deployed before the palace, and made an attempt to charge the skirmishers. Captain Vinton repulsed them with his light troops, and prevented many from re-entering, rushing in themselves at every opening. At the same moment a charge was ordered—and through a breach made by the howitzer the gallant troops rushed in, and in a short time the formidable palace, and the fort adjoining its walls, were clear of every Mexican. In this assault the killed on the side of

the Americans were seven, and the wounded twelve; the Mexicans losing thirty killed, at least.

On the morning of the 23d, General Worth commenced firing into the city its own ammunition, and a fire was also opened from one of the heights taken on the 21st. A ten-inch mortar had been received from General Taylor, and now General Worth, having driven in the enemy from their outer works, entered the city from the western side. Through this day the division under General Worth were engaged in street skirmishes, forcing their way into the city, every step being disputed, and every house a fortification. At night the Americans took possession of a Plaza or square, occupying the houses on both sides, and playing with bombs upon the enemy. The Mexicans were now driven as far before Worth's division as they could go without falling into the hands of General Taylor, on the other side. All the defensive works were taken except the citadel, near the centre of the place; and the Mexican troops were now principally posted in the main Plaza, or square. The Texans and Mississippians worked with pickaxes, opening their path toward the principal position of the enemy. But slight obstructions still remained on the morning of the 24th. Through the night

of the 23d these sappers were busy, and by morning had travelled through a whole street; and had erected a battery, which, upon throwing down the slight walls which concealed it from the Plaza, would have poured into the Mexicans with most terrific effect. At this point proceedings were suspended by the conference between Generals Taylor and Ampudia.

Our limits preclude farther details; and from the official report of General Taylor and the sketch we have given of the operations of General Worth, the reader will gather how an army of less than seven thousand men, many of them volunteers, took a strong city, defended by at least seven thousand regulars, and nearly as many irregular troops, strongly fortified in their position, and contending for the defence of their country. We should be pleased farther to particularise the instances of individual gallantry; but must dismiss this part of the subject with the remark that the operations of the besiegers exhibit no instance of any other than gallant conduct. Defection or cowardice would have ruined the enterprise. The hardihood and patient endurance of labour and of suffering which our troops displayed, merit the high encomiums which have been paid them by their several officers; and which

the verdict of the nation has endorsed. To take such a city, with an inequality of force, and without a battering train, is indeed a feat which would give character to a whole war, if there were no other brilliant events in its history. But before it came Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and after it Buena Vista; to say nothing of the operations of Vera Cruz and Cerro Gordo.

Between the siege of Monterey and the battle of Buena Vista five months intervened. During that period the main body of General Taylor's force was reduced to a very small number, but was subsequently reinforced by arrivals of volunteers. The "Central Division of the Army of Mexico," organised by General Wool, under orders from the War Department, crossed the Rio Grande at Presidio, and after a march through an unfrequented part of Mexico, marked by no event save the peaceful capture of Chihuahua, joined the main body under General Taylor, in season for the victory of Buena Vista.

The troops withdrawn from General Taylor, and ordered to march under command of General Worth toward Vera Cruz, were taken leave of by their gallant commander in a characteristic and feeling address. He then fell back on Monterey, and in



February had received accessions to his force, bringing it up to about 6000 men. With these and the accessions received, he still kept command of his points in advance, notwithstanding that he had been recommended to fall back on Monterey. The event proved his skill and sagacity.

The details of the battle of Buena Vista we leave to the official report of General Taylor, which will be found in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Official Report of General Taylor—Preparations for Battle—Movements of different bodies—Gallantry of Officers and Men—Loss of Officers and Soldiers.



HE could not give a more distinct and satisfactory chart of the movements of the troops during the engagement at Buena Vista, nor at the same time a more intelligible general narrative, than by quoting the despatch of the General commanding

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF OCCUPATION, }  
*Agua Nueva, March 6, 1847.* }

SIR : I have the honour to submit a detailed report of the operations of the forces under my command, which resulted in the engagement of Buena Vista, the repulse of the Mexican army, and the re-occupation of this position.

The information which reached me of the advance and concentration of a heavy Mexican force in my front, had assumed such a probable form, as to induce

a special examination far beyond the reach of our pickets, to ascertain its correctness. A small party of Texan spies, under Major McCullough, despatched to the hacienda of Encarnacion, thirty miles from this, on the route to San Luis Potosi, had reported a cavalry force of unknown strength at that place. On the 20th of February, a strong reconnaissance under Lieutenant Colonel May was despatched to the hacienda of Heclionda, while Major McCullough made another examination of Encarnacion. The result of these expeditions left no doubt that the enemy was in large force at Encarnacion, under the orders of General Santa Anna, and that he meditated a forward movement and attack upon our position.

As the camp of Agua Nueva could be turned on either flank, and as the enemy's force was greatly superior to our own, particularly in the arm of cavalry, I determined, after much consideration, to take up a position about eleven miles in rear, and there await the attack. The army broke up its camp and marched at noon on the 21st, encamping at the new position a little in front of the hacienda of Buena Vista. With a small force I proceeded to Saltillo, to make some necessary arrangements for the defence of the town, leaving Brigadier

General Wool in the immediate command of the troops.

Before those arrangements were completed, on the morning of the 22d, I was advised that the enemy was in sight, advancing. Upon reaching the ground it was found that his cavalry advance was in our front, having marched from Encarnacion, as we have since learned, at 11 o'clock on the day previous, and driving in a mounted force left at Agua Nueva to cover the removal of public stores. Our troops were in position, occupying a line of remarkable strength. The road at this point becomes a narrow defile, the valley on its right being rendered quite impracticable for artillery by a system of deep and impassable gullies, while on the left a succession of rugged ridges and precipitous ravines extends far back toward the mountain which bounds the valley. The features of the ground were such as nearly to paralyze the artillery and cavalry of the enemy, while his infantry could not derive all the advantage of its numerical superiority. In this position we prepared to receive him. Captain Washington's battery (4th artillery) was posted to command the road, while the 1st and 2d Illinois regiments, under Colonels Hardin and Bissell, each eight companies (to the latter of which was attached

Captain Conner's company of Texas volunteers), and the 2d Kentucky, under Colonel McKee, occupied the crests of the ridges on the left and in rear. The Arkansas and Kentucky regiments of cavalry, commanded by Colonels Yell and H. Marshall, occupied the extreme left near the base of the mountain, while the Indiana brigade, under Brigadier General Lane (composed of the 2d and 3d regiments, under Colonels Bowles and Lane), the Mississippi riflemen, under Colonel Davis, the squadrons of the 1st and 2d dragoons, under Captain Steen and Lieutenant Colonel May, and the light batteries of Captains Sherman and Bragg, 3d artillery, were held in reserve.

At 11 o'clock, I received from General Santa Anna a summons to surrender at discretion, which, with a copy of my reply, I have already transmitted. The enemy still forbore his attack, evidently waiting for the arrival of his rear columns, which could be distinctly seen by our look-outs as they approached the field. A demonstration made on his left caused me to detach the 2d Kentucky regiment and a section of artillery to our right, in which position they bivouacked for the night. In the mean time the Mexican light troops had engaged ours on the extreme left (composed of parts of the Kentucky and

Arkansas cavalry dismounted, and a rifle battalion from the Indiana brigade, under Major Gorman, the whole commanded by Colonel Marshall), and kept up a sharp fire, climbing the mountain side, and apparently endeavouring to gain our flank. Three pieces of Captain Washington's battery had been detached to the left, and were supported by the 2d Indiana regiment. An occasional shell was thrown by the enemy into this part of our line, but without effect. The skirmishing of the light troops was kept up with trifling loss on our part until dark, when I became convinced that no serious attack would be made before morning, and returned, with the Mississippi regiment and squadron of 2d dragoons, to Saltillo. The troops bivouacked without fires, and laid upon their arms. A body of cavalry, some 1500 strong, had been visible all day in rear of the town, having entered the valley through a narrow pass east of the city. This cavalry, commanded by General Minon, had evidently been thrown in our rear to break up and harass our retreat, and perhaps make some attempt against the town if practicable. The city was occupied by four excellent companies of Illinois volunteers, under Major Warren, of the 1st regiment. A field-work, which commanded most of the approaches,

was garrisoned by Captain Webster's company, 1st artillery, and armed with two 24-pound howitzers, while the train and head-quarter camp was guarded by two companies of Mississippi riflemen, under Captain Rogers, and a field-piece commanded by Captain Shover, 3d artillery. Having made these dispositions for the protection of the rear, I proceeded on the morning of the 23d to Buena Vista, ordering forward all the other available troops. The action had commenced before my arrival on the field.

During the evening and night of the 22d the enemy had thrown a body of light troops on the mountain side, with the purpose of outflanking our left; and it was here that the action of the 23d commenced at an early hour. Our riflemen, under Colonel Marshall, who had been reinforced by three companies under Major Trail, 2d Illinois volunteers, maintained their ground handsomely against a greatly superior force, holding themselves under cover, and using their weapons with deadly effect. About eight o'clock a strong demonstration was made against the centre of our position, a heavy column moving along the road. This force was soon dispersed by a few rapid and well-directed shots from Captain Washington's battery. In the

mean time the enemy was concentrating a large force of infantry and cavalry under cover of the ridges, with the obvious intention of forcing our left, which was posted on an extensive plateau. The 2d Indiana and 2d Illinois regiments formed this part of our line, the former covering three pieces of light artillery, under the orders of Captain O'Brien—Brigadier General Lane being in the immediate command. In order to bring his men within effective range, General Lane ordered the artillery and 2d Indiana regiment forward. The artillery advanced within musket range of a heavy body of Mexican infantry, and was served against it with great effect, but without being able to check its advance. The infantry ordered to its support had fallen back in disorder, being exposed, as well as the battery, not only to a severe fire of small-arms from the front, but also to a murderous cross-fire of grape and canister from a Mexican battery on the left. Captain O'Brien found it impossible to retain his position without support, but was only able to withdraw two of his pieces, all the horses and cannoneers of the third piece being killed or disabled. The 2d Indiana regiment, which had fallen back as stated, could not be rallied, and took no farther part in the action, except a handful of men, who, under its gallant



colonel, Bowles, joined the Mississippi regiment, and did good service, and those fugitives who, at a later period in the day, assisted in defending the train and depôt at Buena Vista. This portion of our line having given way, and the enemy appearing in overwhelming force against our left flank, the light troops which had rendered such good service on the mountain were compelled to withdraw, which they did, for the most part, in good order. Many, however, were not rallied until they reached the depôt at Buena Vista, to the defence of which they afterward contributed.

Colonel Bissell's regiment, (2d Illinois,) which had been joined by a section of Captain Sherman's battery, had become completely outflanked, and was compelled to fall back, being entirely unsupported. The enemy was now pouring masses of infantry and cavalry along the base of the mountain on our left, and was gaining our rear in great force. At this moment I arrived upon the field. The Mississippi regiment had been directed to the left before reaching the position, and immediately came into action against the Mexican infantry which had turned our flank. The 2d Kentucky regiment and a section of artillery under Captain Bragg, had previously been ordered from the right to reinforce our

left, and arrived at a most opportune moment. That regiment, and a portion of the 1st Illinois, under Colonel Harden, gallantly drove the enemy, and recovered a portion of the ground we had lost. The batteries of Captains Sherman and Bragg were in position on the plateau, and did much execution, not only in front, but particularly upon the masses which had gained our rear. Discovering that the enemy was heavily pressing upon the Mississippi regiment, the 3d Indiana regiment, under Colonel Lane, was despatched to strengthen that part of our line, which formed a crotchet perpendicular to the first line of battle. At the same time Lieutenant Kilburn, with a piece of Captain Bragg's battery, was directed to support the infantry there engaged. The action was for a long time warmly sustained at that point—the enemy making several efforts both with infantry and cavalry against our line, and being always repulsed with heavy loss. I had placed all the regular cavalry and Captain Pike's squadron of Arkansas horse under the orders of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel May, with directions to hold in check the enemy's column, still advancing to the rear along the base of the mountain, which was done in conjunction with the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry under Colonels Marshall and Yell.

In the mean time our left, which was still strongly threatened by a superior force, was farther strengthened by the detachment of Captain Bragg's and a portion of Captain Sherman's batteries to that quarter. The concentration of artillery fire upon the masses of the enemy along the base of the mountain, and the determined resistance offered by the two regiments opposed to them, had created confusion in their ranks, and some of the corps attempted to effect a retreat upon their main line of battle. The squadron of the 1st dragoons, under Lieutenant Rucker, was now ordered up the deep ravine which these retreating corps were endeavouring to cross, in order to charge and disperse them. The squadron proceeded to the point indicated, but could not accomplish the object, being exposed to a heavy fire from a battery established to cover the retreat of those corps. While the squadron was detached on this service, a large body of the enemy was observed to concentrate on our extreme left, apparently with the view of making a descent upon the hacienda of Buena Vista, where our train and baggage were deposited. Lieutenant Colonel May was ordered to the support of that point, with two pieces of Captain Sherman's battery under Lieutenant Reynolds. In the mean time, the scattered forces near

the hacienda, composed in part of Majors Trail and Gorman's commands, had been to some extent organized under the advice of Major Monroe, chief of artillery, with the assistance of Major Morrison, volunteer staff, and were posted to defend the position. Before our cavalry had reached the hacienda, that of the enemy had made its attack; having been handsomely met by the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry under Colonels Marshall and Yell. The Mexican column immediately divided, one portion sweeping by the depôt, where it received a destructive fire from the force which had collected there, and then gaining the mountain opposite, under a fire from Lieutenant Reynold's section, the remaining portion regaining the base of the mountain on our left. In the charge at Buena Vista, Colonel Yell fell gallantly at the head of his regiment; we also lost Adjutant Vaughan, of the Kentucky cavalry—a young officer of much promise. Lieutenant Colonel May, who had been rejoined by the squadron of the 1st dragoons and by portions of the Arkansas and Indiana troops, under Lieutenant Colonel Roane and Major Gorman, now approached the base of the mountain, holding in check the right flank of the enemy, upon whose masses, crowded

in the narrow gorges and ravines, our artillery was doing fearful execution.

The position of that portion of the Mexican army which had gained our rear was now very critical, and it seemed doubtful whether it could regain the main body. At this moment I received from General Santa Anna a message by a staff officer, desiring to know what I wanted? I immediately despatched Brigadier General Wool to the Mexican general-in-chief, and sent orders to cease firing. Upon reaching the Mexican lines, General Wool could not cause the enemy to cease their fire, and accordingly returned without having an interview. The extreme right of the enemy continued its retreat along the base of the mountain, and finally, in spite of all our efforts, effected a junction with the remainder of the army.

During the day, the cavalry of General Minon had ascended the elevated plain above Saltillo, and occupied the road from the city to the field of battle, where they intercepted several of our men. Approaching the town, they were fired upon by Captain Webster from the redoubt occupied by his company, and then moved off towards the eastern side of the valley, and obliquely towards Buena Vista. At this time, Captain Shover moved rapidly

forward with his piece, supported by a miscellaneous command of mounted volunteers, and fired several shots at the cavalry with great effect. They were driven into the ravines which lead to the lower valley, closely pursued by Captain Shover, who was farther supported by a piece of Captain Webster's battery, under Lieutenant Donaldson, which had advanced from the redoubt, supported by Captain Wheeler's company of Illinois volunteers. The enemy made one or two efforts to charge the artillery, but was finally driven back in a confused mass, and did not again appear upon the plain.

In the mean time, the firing had partially ceased upon the principal field. The enemy seemed to confine his efforts to the protection of his artillery, and I had left the plateau for a moment, when I was recalled thither by a very heavy musketry fire. On regaining that position, I discovered that our infantry (Illinois and 2d Kentucky) had engaged a greatly superior force of the enemy—evidently his reserve—and that they had been overwhelmed by numbers. The moment was most critical. Captain O'Brien, with two pieces, had sustained this heavy charge to the last, and was finally obliged to leave his guns on the field—his infantry support being entirely routed. Captain Bragg, who had just ar-

rived from the left, was ordered at once into battery. Without any infantry to support him, and at the imminent risk of losing his guns, this officer came rapidly into action, the Mexican line being but a few yards from the muzzle of his pieces. The first discharge of canister caused the enemy to hesitate, the second and third drove him back in disorder, and saved the day. The 2d Kentucky regiment, which had advanced beyond supporting distance in this affair, was driven back and closely pressed by the enemy's cavalry. Taking a ravine which led in the direction of Captain Washington's battery, their pursuers became exposed to his fire, which soon checked and drove them back with loss. In the mean time the rest of our artillery had taken position on the plateau, covered by the Mississippi and 3d Indiana regiments, the former of which had reached the ground in time to pour a fire into the right flank of the enemy, and thus contribute to his repulse. In this last conflict we had the misfortune to sustain a very heavy loss. Colonel Hardin, 1st Illinois, and Colonel McKee and Lieutenant Colonel Clay, 2d Kentucky regiment, fell at this time while gallantly leading their commands.

No farther attempt was made by the enemy to force our position, and the approach of night gave

an opportunity to pay proper attention to the wounded, and also to refresh the soldiers, who had been exhausted by incessant watchfulness and combat. Though the night was severely cold, the troops were compelled for the most to bivouac without fires, expecting that morning would renew the conflict. During the night the wounded were removed to Saltillo, and every preparation made to receive the enemy, should he again attack our position. Seven fresh companies were drawn from the town, and Brigadier General Marshall, with a reinforcement of Kentucky cavalry and four heavy guns, under Captain Prentiss, 1st artillery, was near at hand, when it was discovered that the enemy had abandoned his position during the night. Our scouts soon ascertained that he had fallen back upon Agua Nueva. The great disparity of numbers, and the exhaustion of our troops, rendered it inexpedient and hazardous to attempt pursuit. A staff officer was despatched to General Santa Anna to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, which was satisfactorily completed on the following day. Our own dead were collected and buried, and the Mexican wounded, of which a large number had been left upon the field, were removed to Saltillo, and



rendered as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

On the evening of the 26th, a close reconnoissance was made of the enemy's position, which was found to be occupied only by a small body of cavalry, the infantry and artillery having retreated in the direction of San Luis Potosi. On the 27th, our troops resumed their former camp at Agua Nueva, the enemy's rear-guard evacuating the place as we approached, leaving a considerable number of wounded. It was my purpose to beat up his quarters at Encarnacion early the next morning, but upon examination, the weak condition of the cavalry horses rendered it unadvisable to attempt so long a march without water. A command was finally despatched to Encarnacion, on the 1st of March, under Colonel Belknap. Some two hundred wounded, and about sixty Mexican soldiers were found there, the army having passed on in the direction of Matehuala, with greatly reduced numbers, and suffering much from hunger. The dead and dying were strewn upon the road and crowded the buildings of the hacienda.

The American force engaged in the action of Buena Vista is shown, by the accompanying field report, to have been 334 officers, and 4425 men, ex-

clusive of the small command left in and near Saltillo. Of this number, two squadrons of cavalry and three batteries of light artillery, making not more than 453 men, composed the only force of regular troops. The strength of the Mexican army is stated by General Santa Anna, in his summons, to be 20,000; and that estimate is confirmed by all the information since obtained. Our loss is 267 killed, 456 wounded, and 23 missing. Of the numerous wounded, many did not require removal to the hospital, and it is hoped that a comparatively small number will be permanently disabled. The Mexican loss in killed and wounded may be fairly estimated at 1500, and will probably reach 2000. At least 500 of their killed were left upon the field of battle. We have no means of ascertaining the number of deserters and dispersed men from their ranks, but it is known to be very great.

Our loss has been especially severe in officers, twenty-eight having been killed upon the field. We have to lament the death of Captain George Lincoln, Assistant Adjutant General, serving in the staff of General Wool—a young officer of high bearing and approved gallantry, who fell early in the action. No loss falls more heavily upon the army in the field than that of Colonels Hardin and McKee, and

Lieutenant Colonel Clay. Possessing in a remarkable degree the confidence of their commands, and the last two having enjoyed the advantage of a military education, I had looked particularly to them for support in case we met the enemy. I need not say that their zeal in engaging the enemy, and the cool and steadfast courage with which they maintained their positions during the day, fully realized my hopes, and caused me to feel yet more sensibly their untimely loss.

I perform a grateful duty in bringing to the notice of the government the general good conduct of the troops. Exposed for successive nights, without fires, to the severity of the weather, they were ever prompt and cheerful in the discharge of every duty; and finally displayed conspicuous steadiness and gallantry in repulsing, at great odds, a disciplined foe. While the brilliant success achieved by their arms releases me from the painful necessity of specifying many cases of bad conduct before the enemy, I feel an increased obligation to mention particular corps and officers, whose skill, coolness, and gallantry in trying situations, and under a continued and heavy fire, seem to merit particular notice.

To Brigadier General Wool my obligations are especially due. The high state of discipline and

instruction of several of the volunteer regiments was attained under his command, and to his vigilance and arduous service before the action, and his gallantry and activity on the field, a large share of our success may justly be attributed. During most of the engagement he was in immediate command of the troops thrown back on our left flank. I beg leave to recommend him to the favourable notice of the government. Brigadier General Lane (slightly wounded) was active and zealous throughout the day, and displayed great coolness and gallantry before the enemy.

The services of the light artillery, always conspicuous, were more than usually distinguished. Moving rapidly over the roughest ground, it was always in action at the right place and the right time, and its well-directed fire dealt destruction in the masses of the enemy. While I recommend to particular favour the gallant conduct and valuable services of Major Munroe, chief of artillery, and Captains Washington, 4th artillery, and Sherman and Bragg, 3d artillery, commanding batteries, I deem it no more than just to mention all the subaltern officers. They were nearly all detached at different times, and in every situation exhibited conspicuous skill and gallantry. Captain O'Brien, Lieutenants Brent,

Whiting, and Couch, 4th artillery, and Bryan, Topographical Engineers, (slightly wounded,) were attached to Captain Washington's battery. Lieutenants Thomas, Reynolds, and French, 3d artillery, (severely wounded,) to that of Captain Sherman; and Captain Shover and Lieutenant Kilburn, 3d artillery, to that of Captain Bragg. Captain Shover, in conjunction with Lieutenant Donaldson, 1st artillery, rendered gallant and important service in repulsing the cavalry of General Minon. The regular cavalry, under Lieutenant Colonel May, with which was associated Captain Pike's squadron of Arkansas horse, rendered useful service in holding the enemy in check and in covering the batteries at several points. Captain Steen, 1st dragoons, was severely wounded early in the day, while gallantly endeavouring, with my authority, to rally the troops which were falling to the rear.

The Mississippi riflemen, under Colonel Davis, were highly conspicuous for their gallantry and steadiness, and sustained throughout the engagement the reputation of veteran troops. Brought into action against an immensely superior force, they maintained themselves for a long time unsupported and with heavy loss, and held an important part of the field until reinforced. Colonel Davis,

though severely wounded, remained in the saddle until the close of the action. His distinguished coolness and gallantry at the head of his regiment on this day entitle him to the particular notice of the government. The 3d Indiana regiment, under Colonel Lane, and a fragment of the 2d, under Colonel Bowles, were associated with the Mississippi regiment during the greater portion of the day, and acquitted themselves creditably in repulsing the attempts of the enemy to break that portion of our line. The Kentucky cavalry, under Colonel Marshall, rendered good service dismounted, acting as light troops on our left, and afterward, with a portion of the Arkansas regiment, in meeting and dispersing the column of cavalry at Buena Vista. The 1st and 2d Illinois, and the 2d Kentucky regiments, served immediately under my eye, and I bear a willing testimony to their excellent conduct throughout the day. The spirit and gallantry with which the 1st Illinois and 2d Kentucky engaged the enemy in the morning, restored confidence to that part of the field, while the list of casualties will show how much these three regiments suffered in sustaining the heavy charge of the enemy in the afternoon. Captain Conner's company of Texas volunteers, attached to the 2d

Illinois regiment, fought bravely, its captain being wounded and two subalterns killed. Colonel Bissell, the only surviving colonel of these regiments, merits notice for his coolness and bravery on this occasion. After the fall of the field-officers of the 1st Illinois and 2d Kentucky regiments, the command of the former devolved upon Lieutenant Colonel Weatherford; that of the latter upon Major Fry.

Regimental commanders and others who have rendered reports, speak in general terms of the good conduct of their officers and men, and have specified many names, but the limits of this report forbid a recapitulation of them here. I may, however, mention Lieutenants Rucker and Campbell of the dragoons, and Captain Pike, Arkansas cavalry, commanding squadrons; Lieutenant Colonel Field, Kentucky cavalry; Lieutenant Colonel Roane, Arkansas cavalry, upon whom the command devolved after the fall of Colonel Yell; Major Bradford, Captain Sharpe (severely wounded), and Adjutant Griffith, Mississippi regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Hadden, 2d Indiana regiment, and Lieutenant Robinson, aid-de-camp to General Lane; Lieutenant Colonel Weatherford, 1st Illinois regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Morrison, Major Trail, and

Adjutant Whiteside (severely wounded), 2d Illinois regiment; and Major Fry, 2d Kentucky regiment, as being favourably noticed for gallantry and good conduct. Major McCulloch, quartermaster in the volunteer service, rendered important services before the engagement, in the command of a spy company, and during the affair was associated with the regular cavalry. To Major Warren, 1st Illinois volunteers, I feel much indebted for his firm and judicious course, while exercising command in the city of Saltillo.

The medical staff, under the able direction of Assistant-Surgeon Hitchcock, were assiduous in attention to the wounded upon the field, and in their careful removal to the rear. Both in these respects, and in the subsequent organization and service of the hospitals, the administration of this department was everything that could be wished.

Brigadier General Wool speaks in high terms of the officers of his staff, and I take pleasure in mentioning them here, having witnessed their activity and zeal upon the field. Lieutenant and Aid-de-camp McDowell, Colonel Churchill, inspector-general, Captain Chapman, assistant quartermaster, Lieutenant Sitgreaves, Topographical Engineers, and Captains Howard and Davis, volunteer service,



are conspicuously noticed by the general for their gallantry and good conduct. Messrs. March, Adicks, Potts, Harrison, Burgess, and Dusenbery, attached in various capacities to General Wool's head-quarters, are likewise mentioned for their intelligent alacrity in conveying orders to all parts of the field.

In conclusion, I beg leave to speak of my own staff, to whose exertions in rallying troops and communicating orders I feel greatly indebted. Major Bliss, assistant adjutant general, Captain J. H. Eaton, and Lieutenant R. S. Garnett, aids-de-camp, served near my person, and were prompt and zealous in the discharge of every duty. Major Munroe, beside rendering valuable service as chief of artillery, was active and instrumental, as were also Colonels Churchill and Belknap, inspectors-general, in rallying troops and disposing them for the defence of the train and baggage. Colonel Whiting, quartermaster general, and Captain Eaton, chief of the subsistence department, were engaged with the duties of their departments, and also served in my immediate staff on the field. Captain Sibley, assistant quartermaster, was necessarily left with the head-quarter camp near town, where his services were highly useful. Major Mansfield and Lieutenant Benham, Engineers,

and Captain Linnard and Lieutenants Pope and Franklin, Topographical Engineers, were employed before and during the engagement in making reconnoissances, and on the field were very active in bringing information and in conveying my orders to distant points. Lieutenant Kingsbury, in addition to his proper duties as ordnance officer, Captain Chilton, assistant quartermaster, and Majors Dix and Coffee, served also as extra aids-de-camp, and were actively employed in the transmission of orders. Mr. Thomas L. Crittenden, of Kentucky, though not in service, volunteered as my aid-de-camp on this occasion, and served with credit in that capacity. Major Craig, chief of ordnance, and Surgeon Craig, medical director, had been detached on duty from head-quarters, and did not reach the ground until the morning of the 24th—too late to participate in the action, but in time to render useful services in their respective departments of the staff.

I respectfully enclose returns of the troops engaged, and of casualties incident to the battle.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

*Major General U. S. A., Commanding.*

The Adjutant General of the Army, }  
Washington, D. C. }

## CHAPTER XV.

Santa Anna's Summons and General Taylor's Reply—Flags of Truce—General Taylor's Indifference to Danger—His plan of the Engagement—Anecdote—His reception of the news of his Nomination to the Presidency—Conclusion.



IN General Taylor's despatch he refers to a summons from Santa Anna, to "surrender at discretion." This summons and the reply we subjoin. The first is valuable as asserting the number of troops which the Mexican general had at his command, a statement corroborated by other circumstances, and the acknowledgments of prisoners and deserters. The reply of General Taylor is a model for its calm courage and dignified tone; and as such has been universally admired. It may indeed be pronounced unequalled.

The summons of Santa Anna was couched in the following terms :

"You are surrounded by 20,000 men, and cannot, in any human probability, avoid suffering a rout, and being cut to pieces with your troops; but

as you deserve consideration and particular esteem, I wish to save you from a catastrophe, and for that purpose give you this notice, in order that you may surrender at discretion, under the assurance that you will be treated with the consideration belonging to the Mexican character, to which end you will be granted an hour's time to make up your mind, to commence from the moment when my flag of truce arrives in your camp. With this view, I assure you of my particular consideration.

"God and Liberty. Camp at Encantada, February 22d, 1847.

"ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA."

To this summons the reply of General Taylor was as follows :

"SIR: In reply to your note of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request.

With high respect, I am, sir,

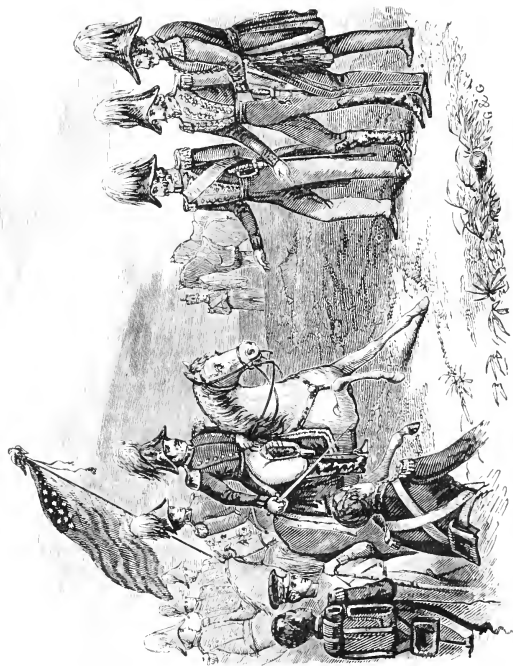
Your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

*Major General U. S. A., Commanding.*

Two other white flags passed during the battle. In General Taylor's report, by referring to page 189 of this book it will be perceived that General





"GENERAL TAYLOR NEVER SURRENDERS."

Taylor passes over this occurrence with a magnanimity which makes him do more than justice even to an enemy. A portion of the Mexicans were, indeed, in a critical situation. Nothing but respect to the flag on the part of the Americans,—a respect which was not shown by the Mexicans, enabled the separated detachment of Santa Anna's force to rejoin the main body. It was a ruse to gain time; and was accompanied by treachery most reprehensible. General Taylor does not state what reply he instructed General Wool to make. Another account says that General Taylor replied that he wanted peace. Major Coffee, the bearer of General Taylor's despatches, gives a very animated account of this interview. The American commander was sitting quietly on his white charger watching the movements of the enemy, when the Mexican officer was presented, and in a very courteous and graceful manner stated that "he had been sent by his excellency General Santa Anna to inquire what he (General Taylor) was waiting for?" Major Coffee says that General Taylor gave the very significant reply "only for General Santa Anna to surrender." In this engagement General Taylor was frequently expostulated with by his staff, for exposing himself; and his horse was objected to, on

account of his colour (white) as affording too conspicuous a mark for the enemy. But the General refused to change his charger—alleging that as the horse had missed Monterey, he was resolved that he should have his full share at Buena Vista. At Monterey it is related, there was a bridge to pass, which was so raked by the enemy's fire that the horsemen dashed over one at a time. General Taylor, when he reached the centre, was struck by some movement at a distance, the motive or particulars of which he desired to discover. Producing his glass, he took a deliberate survey, while those who followed, and were compelled by his exposure to remain in danger themselves, did anything but admire his indifference to the enemy's fire. Such a callousness to danger is better than too great caution, certainly; and General Taylor must be admitted to be the best judge how far it is expedient to impart courage to others by his example.

The other flag sent on the 22d was despatched by General Taylor to a detached body of Mexican infantry, who were contending, with fierce resolution, against a destructive fire. The officer by whom it was sent, Mr. Crittenden, who acted as General Taylor's Aid, was carried, in spite of his



remonstrances, to Santa Anna, blind-folded. The Mexican general asked his mission. He replied that he had no message for the commander, but that he was sent to ask a detached force to surrender, to save the effusion of blood, and as his errand was unsuccessful, he demanded to be sent back to his general. It was then that Santa Anna requested him to tell General Taylor that if he would surrender he would be protected and well cared for. Mr. Crittenden replied that he had no commission to speak with him (Santa Anna) upon that or any other matter. "It is, however," he added, "of no use to send any such message, as *General Taylor never surrenders.*"

This sentence has passed into a motto. Another, the expression of General Taylor himself, is scarcely less famous. The artillery was in this engagement, from the celerity and skill with which it was handled, the salvation of the day more than once; the Americans may indeed be said to have been on the verge of defeat three times. On one of these occasions when the crisis appeared most imminent, General Taylor rode up behind the gallant men, who were working for life, against fearful odds. "A little more grape, Captain Bragg!" said the General, in as calm a voice as if he were making

an indifferent suggestion. The cool and collected manner of the commander put new life into the men—and a little more grape, gallantly served, turned the scale, and the Mexicans were driven back.

The history of the battle of Buena Vista is full of instances of most daring and gallant conduct. It is to be remembered also that the 4000 troops who engaged the Mexican 20,000 were not veterans—but, with the exception of some five hundred, were volunteers. Nor were they the men who had been with Taylor in his previous victories. A small portion only of them were the heroes of Monterey; and the rest faced an enemy for the first time. The arrangements made by Taylor gave his force the advantage of position. Had he fallen back on Monterey, as recommended, he would there with his small force have been shut up, and could not but have lost all the advantages which the taking of that place conferred. But by maintaining his positions in advance, receding from Agua Nueva where his flanks could be turned, and making a stand at Buena Vista where the nature of the ground gave him protection, he made all the fierce courage of his men, and their abiding resolution, available. In his account of the battle, Santa Anna

admits that "by this movement his first plans and dispositions, founded on an expected resistance, (at Agua Nueva,) were rendered abortive." The military skill of General Taylor was shown in his general plan—the courage and patient endurance of commander and of troops crowned the effort with victory, after the day seemed three times to have been lost. The Mexicans were even more advantageously posted in the battle of Resaca de la Palma, and had beside an enormous disparity of force. Yet how different the result!

From the nature of the ground, the battle appeared to be not one engagement, but a series of detached encounters. Now the superiority of force was with a party of Americans, and now with a detachment of Mexicans. With what absorbing interest must the commander have watched the movements on various parts of the field, as he despatched, now in one direction and now in another, orders or reinforcements, thus, by the operations of a controlling mind, giving unity to efforts which appeared divided and partial, while they were in reality working out one great whole! At one time the 2d Kentucky regiment, which had been ordered to support a column hard pressed by the enemy, were obliged to cross a ravine, and in avoiding

gulleys and obstructions, presented at a distance all the appearance of confusion and disorder. "This will not do," said Taylor, who was watching the field intently, "this is not the way for Kentuckians to behave themselves!" Mr. Crittenden, to whom the remark was addressed, could make no reply for mortification; and both Taylor and Crittenden trembled for the honour of their state.

But in a few moments the Kentuckians had crossed the uneven places, and were seen ascending the slope of the valley, shoulder to shoulder, and with the firm and regular step of veterans of a hundred fields. On they moved until they reached the crest of the hill, where they met the enemy before the flush of a temporary advantage had subsided. Here they delivered their fire with such regularity and deadly aim that the decimated phalanx of Mexico gave way and retreated precipitately. As the Kentuckians emerged from the valley, the countenance of the old general, who was regarding them with the intensest interest, gradually relaxed the bitterness of its expression. A glow of pride supplanted the deep mortification which fixed its muscles, and enthusiasm qualified the fierce glance of his eye. Forward they moved under his riveted gaze, whose feelings became more and more wrought up as they





GALLANT CHARGE OF THE KENTUCKIANS AT BUENA VISTA.

approached the scene of carnage. When they opened their fire, the old general could no longer restrain his admiration, but broke forth with a loud huzza—"Hurrah for old Kentucky!"

But our limits warn us to a conclusion. We would proudly bear particular testimony to the courage of the brave who fought and fell—but are forbidden by want of space, and not of inclination. In the language of General Taylor, addressed to Henry Clay upon the death of his son, "A grateful people will do justice to the memory of those who fought and fell on that eventful day;" and like the kind-hearted veteran, we may truly say that in view of the loss of our countrymen we feel no exultation in a victory so dearly purchased.

The eyes of a nation are now turned upon Zachary Taylor. It is not our province to predict what will be the result of his services, to himself, or to his country, but to record what he has done. The subject of so much remark and just eulogy, and the nominee of individuals, cities and parties for the Presidency, he cannot of course have failed to hear what has been so widely uttered. In relation to it, his answers, written and verbal, have always been made in the spirit of the following answer to a friend at Saltillo: "Captain, I am not

ambitious of any civil appointment. It will be my aim to whip these Mexicans, and bring this war to an honourable conclusion, after which I expect to resign my commission, and retire to my farm."

We close our notice of Buena Vista with the following extract from a letter written by a distinguished officer :

"At a time when the fortunes of the day seemed extremely problematical—when many on our side even despaired of success—old Rough and Ready, as he is not inaptly styled, whom you must know, by the by, is short, fat and dumpy in person, with remarkably short legs, took his position on a commanding height, overlooking the two armies. This was about three, or perhaps four o'clock in the afternoon. The enemy, who had succeeded in gaining an advantageous position, made a fierce charge upon our column, and fought with a desperation that seemed for a time to ensure success to their arms. The struggle lasted for some time. All the while, General Taylor was a silent spectator, his countenance exhibiting the most anxious solicitude, alternating between hope and despondency. His staff, perceiving his perilous situation—for he was exposed to the fire of the enemy—approached him and implored him to retire. He



heeded them not. His thoughts were intent upon victory or defeat. He knew not at this moment what the result would be. He felt that that engagement was to decide his fate. He had given all his orders and selected his position. If the day went against him, he was irretrievably lost; if for him, he could rejoice, in common with his countrymen, at the triumphant success of our arms.

“Such seemed to be his thoughts, his determination; and when he saw the enemy give way and retreat, in the utmost confusion, he gave free vent to his pent-up feelings. His right leg was quickly disengaged from the pommel of the saddle, where it had remained during the whole of the fierce encounter; his arms, which were calmly folded over his breast, relaxed their hold, his feet firmly danced in the stirrups, and his whole body was in motion. It was a moment of the most exciting and intense interest. His face was suffused with tears. The day was won, the victory complete, his little army saved from defeat and disgrace, and he could not refrain from weeping for joy at what had seemed to so many, but a moment before, as an impossible result.—Long may the noble and kind-hearted old hero live to enjoy the honours of his numerous brilliant victories, and many other honours that a grateful country will ere long bestow upon him!”

While this book is passing through the press, Taylor is still near Monterey. What further operations may be determined upon, remain to be seen. The Mexican general, so confident of victory at Buena Vista, has received another defeat from the Americans at Cerro Gordo—and a third great army of the Mexicans is thus broken up, to say nothing of the capitulations of Monterey and Vera Cruz. It would be tiresome to note the towns, large and small, which are held by the Americans. Whole departments are in the possession of our troops; and the capital of the country itself, unless such an event is averted by negotiation, must be occupied by General Scott. Let us hope for a speedy and an honourable peace—and that not only we, but our children's children, may hereafter, to the end of time, speak of this, as *THE LAST WAR*.

THE END.

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